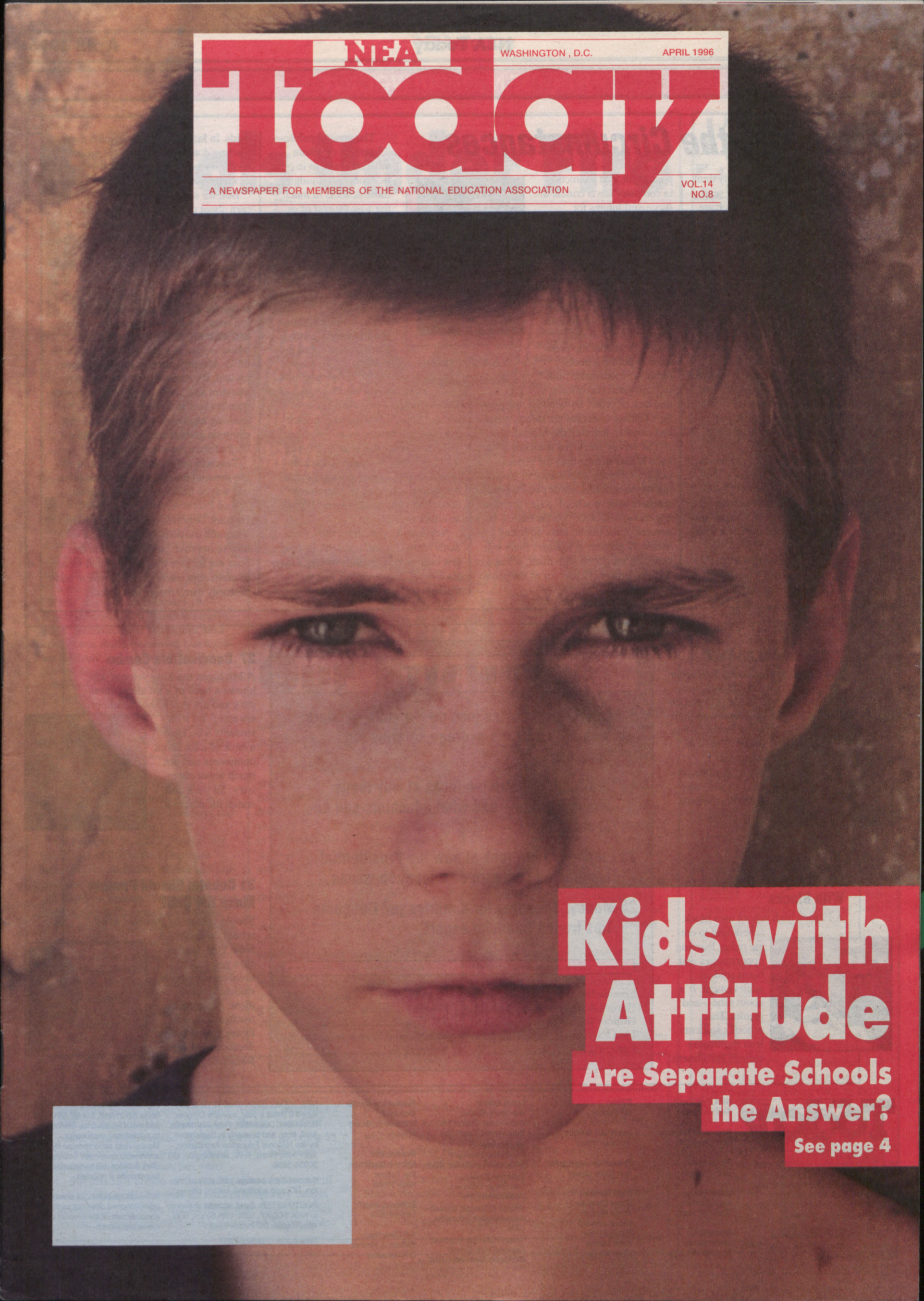
NEA Today

WASHINGTON, D.C. APRIL 1996

A NEWSPAPER FOR MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

VOL.14
NO.8



Kids with Attitude

Are Separate Schools the Answer?

See page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Changing the Circumstances

NEA President
Keith Geiger

What do Americans really think about the schools they send their children to? Which are teachers more fearful of—gun violence in the schoolyard or too little money for textbooks? Is reading Hemingway more important to a child's success than learning European history?

Public Agenda, a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that focuses solely on public policy issues, has over the years sought out answers to these questions. The group's latest national survey, *Given the Circumstances: Teachers Talk About Public Education Today,* is sobering—and enlightening. It provides valuable insight into what we as a profession and as an organization must do to revitalize America's public schools.

Asking teachers the same questions asked of the public in last year's *Assignment Incomplete* survey, Public Agenda's new poll shows that teachers share mainstream America's hopes and concerns for its schoolchildren on most issues.

It comes as no surprise that teachers agree with the public that teaching the basics—reading, writing, and math—is paramount, that instruction in computer use is critical to successful futures for today's students, and that the removal of persistently disruptive troublemakers would help improve academic achievement in the classroom.

Where teachers and the public part ways is in their view of local schools. Teachers say the top problems in public schools today are inadequate funding, crowded classrooms, and lack of order. By contrast, the public's leading concerns are safety, order, and children learning the basics.

The survey notes that teachers, to an even higher degree than the general public, value the importance of teaching the basics. But, while two-thirds of teachers believe schools today are placing enough emphasis on the basics, 60 percent of the public feels differently. While 57 percent of teachers think students are taught enough math, science, and computers, 52 percent of the public disagrees.

The general public—75 percent of whom have no children in public schools—is judging those schools in much the way the rest of us judge, say, the British Parliament. From afar.

But rather than engaging in a battle over who is right and who is wrong, we should instead listen to the survey's warning bell that we are not yet getting our message out to the public.

We know that familiarity breeds respect. Those who *go*—into the schools—*know*. They know what teachers are teaching and what kids are learning. They also know that acknowledging the importance of teaching students computer proficiency does not mean that educators aren't also teaching about Plato and Shakespeare. It's not an either-or situation.

Nor should the push for higher standards be an either-or question. Despite a few overzealous headline writers, *Given the Circumstances* did not find that teachers are unsupportive of higher standards. In fact, the report concludes that teachers don't want to hand out meaningless diplomas. Nor do they want to water down their expectations for any student.

But, for some of our colleagues, concern about raising standards is often juxtaposed with concern about whether a child is coming to school hungry because she hasn't had breakfast or cold because he has no winter coat. Still, we can never use competing concerns as an excuse for not doing all we can to help every single child reach his or her full potential.

Today, we know what teachers think and what the public thinks. We see where we are in sync and where opinions differ. Happily, there is much common ground. By reaching out into our communities and involving parents and other stakeholders in the public schools—by working together—we can expand that common ground and better guarantee a bright future for every child.

Teachers are right on the mark in citing parental involvement as the number one way to help improve our schools.

And Public Agenda Executive Director Deborah Wadsworth is correct when she cautions that "Discourse on how to improve public education that does not include the concerns and ideas of classroom teachers is incomplete and probably dangerously inadequate."

CONTENTS

7 Goodbye to All That
Ask Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (D-Colorado) about children, and she says she sees "them stranded on an island with their government sailing away." Find out what else Schroeder thinks—as she sails away from Washington after 24 years.

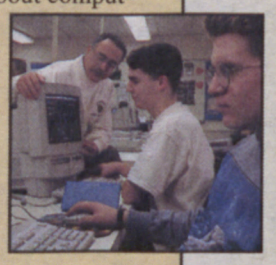
8 Grassroots: Salaries inch up—a state-by-state look at this year's average salaries for teachers.

15 Health: A pediatrician looks at why teens abuse alcohol—and what educators can do to stop them.

23 Election '96: A look at how the Presidential candidates compare on education issues.

25 Money: Shopping for a mortgage? Get some tips from a financial expert.

27 Combustible Combo
A Michigan teaching veteran who knows a heck of a lot about chemistry and not much about computers teams up with students who know a heck of a lot about computers and not much about chemistry. Sit back and watch the reaction.



13 Things Go Better With Blocks
A Florida high school uses block scheduling to create richer learning opportunities and boost student achievement. It's about time—and results. The school's students lead the state in college enrollment.

31 Debate: Should Parents Make the Call?
Should parents be involved in *all* school decisions? A New York teacher says yes: Parent involvement boosts student achievement. A Kentucky teacher disagrees: Leave the classroom decisions to the professionals.

Free or Inexpensive	28	News in Brief	24
Heroes & Zeroes	3	People	20
Human Rights	6	TV Tips	12
Idea Exchange	18	Washington Watch	6
Letters	30	Your NEA	29

NEA Today
April 1996
Vol. 14, No. 8

NEA TODAY is mailed to all NEA members. Annual subscription price: $2.81 (included in membership dues and available only as a part of membership). Institutional subscription price: $35.00 domestic and $54.00 foreign.

Copyright © 1996 by the National Education Association of the United States. All rights reserved.

NEA President: Keith Geiger

Executive Director: Don Cameron

Publisher: Sam Pizzigati

Advertising Coordinator: Suzanne Wade

Classified Advertising: Sherida McGhee

Editor: Bill Fischer

Assistant Editor: Stefanie Weiss

Production Specialist: Ann Marie Bohan

Staff Writers: Diane Dismuke, Karen Gutloff, Leona Hiraoka, Victoria Lytle, Anita Merina, Dave Winans

Local Editor Advisory Board: Bob Carroll, District 65 Educators' Council (IL); Michele Casey, Cumberland Valley Education Association (PA); Suzanne Emery, San Diego Teachers Association (CA); Wayne Etheridge, Baldwin Association of Educators (GA); Susan Pettengill, Freehold Regional High School Education Association (NJ)

Publishing Center Manager: Lorraine Buckland Wilson

Production: Marsha Blackburn, Pat Tolliver, Alice Trued

Editorial Intern: Leslie Harris

Art Direction: William J. Kircher & Associates

NEA TODAY (ISSN 0734-7219) is published 9 times a year, monthly October, November, December, February, March, April, May, and biweekly in September by the National Education Association, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Second class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NEA TODAY, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-3290.

Telephone: 202/822-7207.

Unsolicited feature stories and news items are invited, but NEA TODAY can make no advance commitment to publish any manuscript. Manuscripts accompanied by self-addressed envelopes bearing sufficient postage will be returned within four months if rejected.

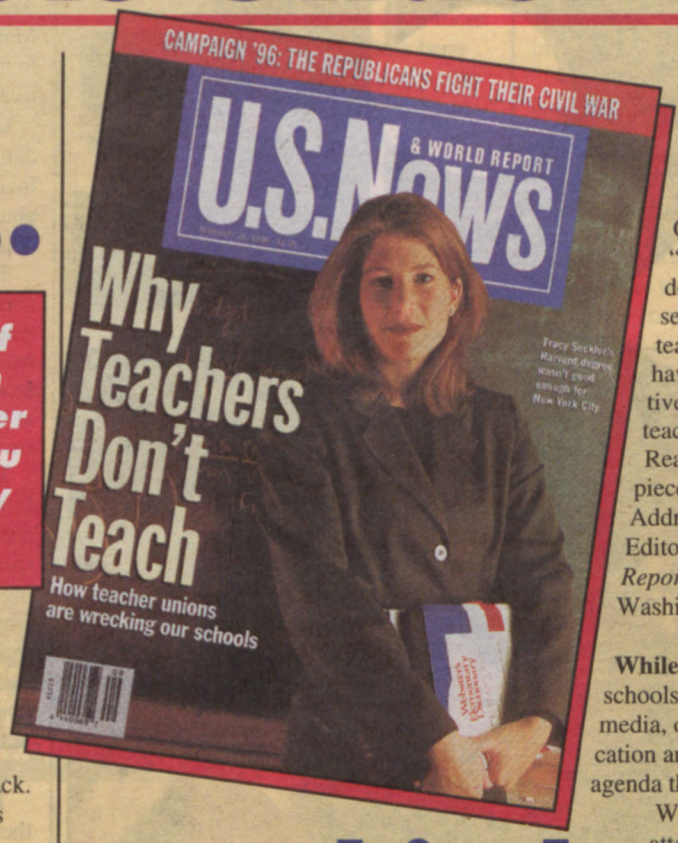
Although advertising is screened, advertisement does not imply NEA endorsement of the product or the views expressed.

NATIONAL NEWS

Schools Under Fire

In Our Faces...

The opponents of public education are getting nastier and sneakier. You can fight back by speaking out.


CAMPAIGN '96: THE REPUBLICANS FIGHT THEIR CIVIL WAR
U.S. News & WORLD REPORT
Why Teachers Don't Teach
How teacher unions are wrecking our schools
Tracy Seckler's Harvard degree wasn't good enough for New York City

If a recent ABC News "20/20" program on teacher tenure and a five-page *U.S. News and World Report* article on school teachers and their unions set your teeth on edge, do what NEA's doing. Talk back.

Some background: An ABC News "20/20" segment on February 16 described tenure as a "lifetime employment" guarantee that "enshrines mediocrity" and makes removing bad teachers difficult or impossible. A balanced report? Hardly.

Retired California high school teacher Wayne Myers wrote back to ABC: "Tenure *promotes* excellence by allowing teachers freedom to stimulate thinking among students and to experiment (within reason) with new approaches.

"When teachers are cowed into conformity because of fear they may be dismissed," he added, "their creativity and enthusiasm are arrested."

On February 26, a *U.S. News* cover story alleged that school employee unions block education reform and support policies that "drive good teachers" out of the profession, "leaving incompetents entrenched in many classrooms."

The article accuses unions of not supporting high teaching standards. And it criticizes unions for upholding contract provisions like seniority, fair discipline, and "single salary pay schedules" (as opposed to merit pay).

It concludes with this observation from unnamed "union watchers": "The education landscape . . . is littered with token NEA reform projects designed to give the appearance of reform-mindedness . . ."

That line rankles John Grossman, president of the Columbus (Ohio) Education Association, who gave *U.S. News* a one-hour interview outlining 11 years of CEA-backed reform initiatives in his district—everything from university-based professional development schools (26 in all) to peer evaluation.

All that added up to a half-sentence in the final article.

Grossman, who joined top district and school board officials in sending a letter of protest to *U.S. News*, calls the article "ridiculous, just not true at all.

"The average NEA member can respond," he adds. "The most productive thing to do with this article is to use it in the classroom to show students what bad journalism is."

Other NEA members, including Association President Keith Geiger, are fighting back by writing back. "Your reporters totally missed the story," Geiger wrote *U.S. News*. "No organization has done more than NEA to set high standards for teachers, make sure they have the skills to be effective, or work to improve the teaching of children."

Ready to give *U.S. News* a piece of your mind? Address your letter to: Letters Editor, *U.S. News and World Report*, 2400 N St., N.W., Washington, DC 20037-1196.

...Behind Our Backs

While bashing public schools and teachers in the media, opponents of public education are also pursuing their agenda through the back door.

Witness their recent attempt in Congress to sneak a $5 million "low-income scholarship"—voucher—plan for Washington, D.C. students into the District's appropriations bill.

The D.C. voucher plan would have, if passed, diverted $5 million in tax dollars to private school tuition, at a time when the D.C. school system can't even find enough budget dollars to pay substitutes.

NEA senior lobbyist Dale Lestina reports that NEA and allies like the National PTA engaged in a successful "full-court press"—backed by President Clinton's veto threat—to lobby against this provision. The voucher "rider" was defeated in a procedural vote.

In Senate debate, voucher proponents characterized their "experimental demonstration program for scholarships" as just a "test of a concept, not a national issue."

But Senator Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) warned that this provision would "for the first time permit federal dollars to subsidize private education. It's the proverbial nose under the camel's tent."

—Dave Winans

Coming Up: Budget Resolution, Governors' Summit

During Senate debate on a "pilot" voucher program for Washington, D.C. students (see above), friends of public education pointed out the absurdity of spending $5 million for vouchers while slashing federal education spending by $3.1 billion this year.

But that $3.1 billion cut is exactly what education will suffer if Congress extends the current temporary budget through the rest of the federal fiscal year. At *NEA Today* presstime, representatives in the House and Senate were debating which final course to take.

The next issue of *NEA Today* will report on that debate, which could be the last chance to head off steep program cuts and school employee layoffs. In the meantime, you'll find the latest on NEA's Web site at (http://www.nea.org).

Also in the next issue, look for a full report on the late March National Governors' Association education summit conference—the first since 1989. NEA's Web site will also be carrying updates on the governors' meeting.

HEROES & ZEROES

A Healthy-Wealthy-and-Wise Award to Seattle teacher Janice Lind-Sherman, who's still teaching despite winning $8 million in the lottery three years ago. Most of the money goes to charity, but this spring Lind-Sherman's using some of it to travel the world. No accidental tourist, Lind-Sherman's turning her travels into a virtual geography game for kids. "Where, oh where is Mrs. Lind-Sherman?" Find out at this Internet address: (http://www.eduhelp.com).

A Cancel-My-Subscription Award to *Glamour* magazine for asking its readers to answer this question: "Have you ever had an affair with a teacher?" And you thought "Hard Copy" was scraping the bottom of the barrel! NEA President Keith Geiger fired off a letter of protest—and invites you to join in. Send your E-mail to Teacher@Glamour.com or send faxes to 212/880-7731.

From Asbury Park to the Backstreets of Philadelphia, a standing ovation for rocker Bruce Springsteen, who donated—and matched—proceeds from merchandise sales at a recent Detroit concert to the city's 2,000 striking newspaper workers. "Unions," he said, "have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country."

The Slinging-Slugs Award goes to Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating for this comment explaining his half-baked merit pay proposal: "You know, it's like if out of 25 teachers, you have one competent teacher and 24 slugs, then the competent teacher would get the merit pay." Think of Keating as the slug—and get out the salt.

Alas, the eyes have it. Accolades to *Give the Gift of Sight* ambassador Ed Begley, Jr., the Lions Clubs International, and LensCrafters for collecting used eyeglasses and distributing them to those who need them worldwide. "Our old and out-of-fashion glasses change lives," Begley says, "allowing many to see clearly for the very first time." Spectacular!

COVER STORY

FACE IT

Want the troublemakers out of your hair? A school staff in Maryland has taken 72 of them out of the mainstream and into their hearts. Does this approach work?

By the time his bus pulls up to the Gateway School at 7:15 a.m., Bruce has been in transit for more than an hour. The hulking seventh grader sulks by the staff members who greet each student every morning—and who quietly look out for distress signals from troubled students.

Bruce is one of 72 stories at the Gateway School in Clarksville, Maryland, an alternative school for kids most teachers don't want in their classrooms—chronic truants, discipline problems, and special ed students who are severely emotionally disturbed.

In his "home school"—his original school—Bruce had great difficulty staying on task in class. He was an intimidator who spent much of his time in the principal's office. When Jeanette Johnson's math class starts at 7:50, Bruce still looks intimidating—and determinedly bored.

But Johnson gamely cajoles the students to focus on their math drill. She's paired Bruce with Steve, a troubled boy who's good at math. Teaching assistants Linda Anglin and Kathy Bird constantly work the room, monitoring each student. Soon enough there are sounds of calculators clicking and pencils erasing.

Bruce gives a quick smirk of pride when Johnson notes that he's the first to finish. And when the class comes alive as she asks them to parse the patterns of exponents flashed on the overhead, Johnson says warmly, "Ah, all my resident geniuses."

"Our kids would rather be bad than dumb," Johnson explains. "But I know if they pitch a paper off their desk, they're not angry about the paper. They can't read it. We can break that cycle."

Gateway is one of many alternative public schools established to handle the few who make it hard for the many.

Eighty-eight percent of teachers nationwide—and 73 percent of the public—think academic achievement would improve substantially if persistent troublemakers were removed from class, according to a recent report from Public Agenda. Around the country, state legislatures—Maryland, for one—are debating whether to mandate the establishment of alternative schools for troublemakers.

Gateway is one such school, and students bring to it almost every problem imaginable: attention deficit disorder, drug abuse, wrenching home situations, chronic depression, schizophrenia.

To help the kids get beyond these sorts of problems and learn, Gateway's teaching staff—13 teachers and four teaching assistants—work with only a few kids at a time. The average class size at Gateway is 12, with some classes as small as four.

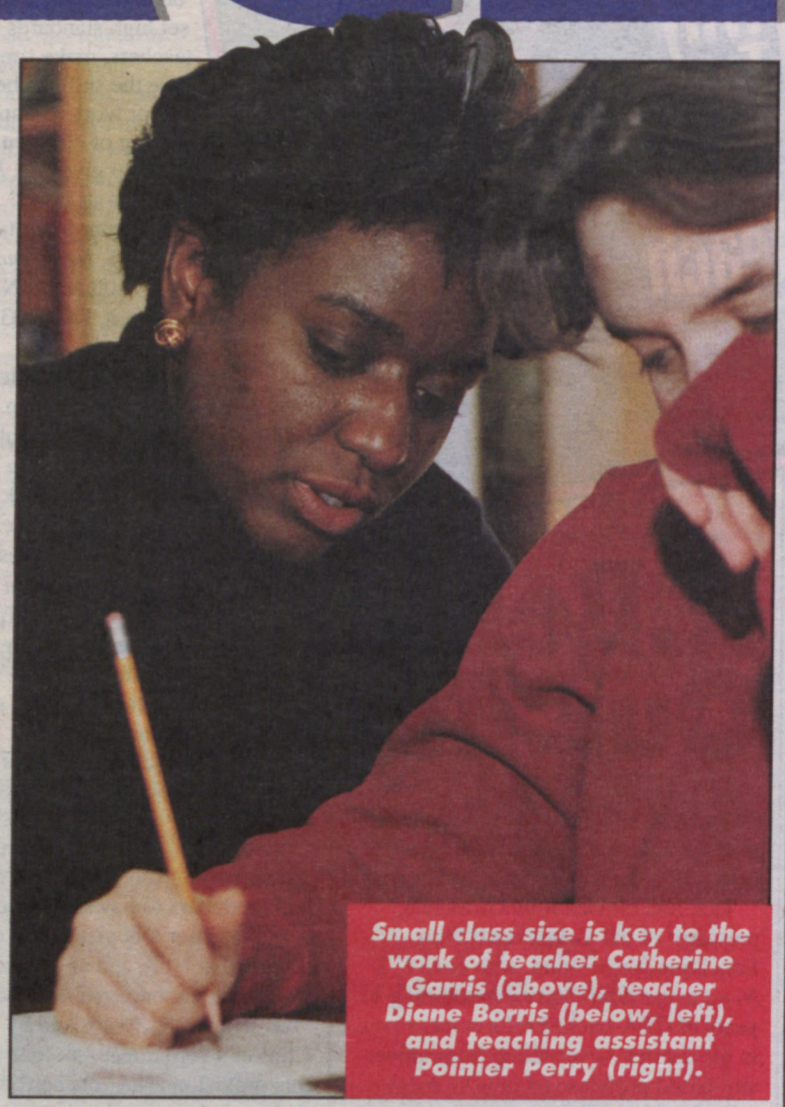
The school is organized so no student falls through the cracks. Gateway staff meet at the end of every day to discuss student progress. Staff members, including principal Larry Cohen, monitor hallways between periods, and each classroom has a phone to help teachers keep track of student whereabouts. In the past two years, only one student has sneaked out of school.

To get into Gateway, students and their families must meet with the school staff to agree on common goals. One boy's mother came wearing jewelry with an explicit, lewd message. Then she passed out during the interview.

"That's why some of these kids show up here every day. We're the sanest thing they know," says teaching assistant Poinier Perry, on her way to the cafeteria to pick up breakfast for one of her students who's been grounded.

"Here you have an opportunity to make a difference to these kids—no, he doesn't like chocolate milk. Regular, please," she tells the staffer behind the small counter. "There aren't any miracles here.

"But these kids are lucky," Perry adds. "There are lots of kids who need to be here. We just don't have the room."



Small class size is key to the work of teacher Catherine Garris (above), teacher Diane Borris (below, left), and teaching assistant Poinier Perry (right).

Gateway at a Glance

- **Established:** 1982
- **Location:** 20 miles outside of Baltimore in Howard County, Maryland
- **Budget:** Gateway receives most of a $1,028,000 allocation for alternative programs.
- **School enrollment:** 27 middle school students, 45 high school students. There is a waiting list. Most students enroll voluntarily.
- **Academics:** Standard texts and curriculum are used.
- **Assessment:** Students enter at "Level 1." As school performance improves, they are promoted through Level 5, at which time they can return to their home school. Some opt to stay.
- **Positive discipline:** Students receive points every period for things done well—attentiveness, attendance, performance. They can redeem these points for privileges, from leaving class to go to the bathroom to trips to the soda machine.
- **Inclusion:** There is full inclusion of special ed students. Both the middle and high school have one teacher who's a special ed teacher.
- **Staff:** Virtually all the staff are members of the Howard County Education Association.

Photographed by Joe Di Dio

One student says of Amy Strahl, "She's the coolest teacher. She understands how I am."

Michael, 13, qui-etly arranges and rearranges the candy Valentine hearts on his desk. He looks young for his age, but he sounds weary beyond his years.

"I've got old memories, but I try to distance myself from those situations, like smoking pot," he says softly. "I took a lot of drugs, and I'm manic depressive. I used to hang around with the older kids. Now I fight the system not with my fists, but with this"—he taps his temple—"and a pencil.

"I just talked to one of my old friends. I got out. He's still in it, and he sounds dead," says Michael, still fingering the candy. "I came to this school like all the others. We were the people we were then. I wouldn't want to be there now."

Upstairs in the high school, in Amy Strahl's environmental science class, three students sit around a central table.

Thomas takes his purple pen—a loaner from Strahl—and doodles continuously. Kerry jiggles in her seat, and her attention wanders unless Strahl engages her constantly. Amy sits there quietly—she's been gone for three weeks in another program. Strahl taps the desk every minute or so, a purposeful technique to keep Amy focused on the lesson.

Amid all the attempted distractions, Strahl makes the lessons sink in. Thomas can't help himself, as he pops up with answers like "vegetation," "soil creep," "leeward." But then a few minutes later, he throws himself out of his chair.

The day's lesson, erosion, aptly describes how Strahl wears away her kids' barrier to learning.

"A boulder is too heavy to be lifted up or carried," she explains, "but if the water is powerful enough, it can be pulled and dragged along."

"What is a metaphor?" Rick Lloyd asks his lit class down the hall.

"Why don't you tell us?" one kid replies as others snicker.

Lloyd plays music to demonstrate metaphors in lyrics. Most kids stay slumped over on their desks. Then comes a Tracy Chapman song about a woman killed by her partner while the police do nothing. Some kids shift, as eyes dart to check out the lyrics.

Lloyd then asks, "What topic did the O.J. and Nicole Simpson trial bring up?" Someone immediately calls out, "Domestic violence," and a lively discussion ensues.

"Child abuse is in many of our kids' backgrounds," Lloyd notes after class. "One [former student] had a restraining order against his own mother, who abused him. His father was in jail, so he lived with his grandmother and her boyfriend. The *grandmother* then moved out, leaving the kid—he's the nicest kid, so genuine—with a man who's not a family member.

"The life these kids have been through—they're adults, and they need to be kids a little bit," says Lloyd. "Here they get a little nurturing they don't get at home, and they get a meal.

"I used to get real upset when a kid dropped out," says Lloyd, who also heads the school's student support team. "Now I think, hey, if the kid's leaving school to go into landscaping, that's productive. And that's my hope—that these kids are productive adults and better equipped to be parents. I don't know if that's rationalizing, but that's reality."

Most Gateway students have dreams—of being a photographer, electrician, astronautical engineer ("or an actor if that doesn't work out"). Some go on to college. But others have more immediate goals.

On the "Accomplishments" bulletin board, some students boast the usual good grades. But improved attendance and attitude take up a good portion of the board. And one student writes, "I'm down from two packs a day to one."

A few doors away, high school students gather in teaching assistant Susie Armiger's room when they need a sympathetic ear or time to calm down.

"My home school sucks," says Jason, one of Armiger's charges. "I didn't go at all. Teachers got on my nerves. Their attitude was, 'Sit here and learn or get out.' Here at Gateway, they make you sit and learn. You get a lot of one-on-one. They care."

Kevin, a senior, has been at Gateway for five years, the longest of any student there. He tried going back to his home school twice: "But I kept falling behind. Everything was boom, boom, boom, too fast.

"You got friends saying, 'Hey man, let's go'—and just leave," Kevin adds as he prints out the schedule for the school pool league that he manages. "I can't have that. I want to graduate. Once you're here, you get the knack."

—Leona Hiraoka

Are Separate Schools the Answer?

The debate over alternative schools for kids who aren't cutting it in regular schools is a hot topic in many school districts these days. To summarize:

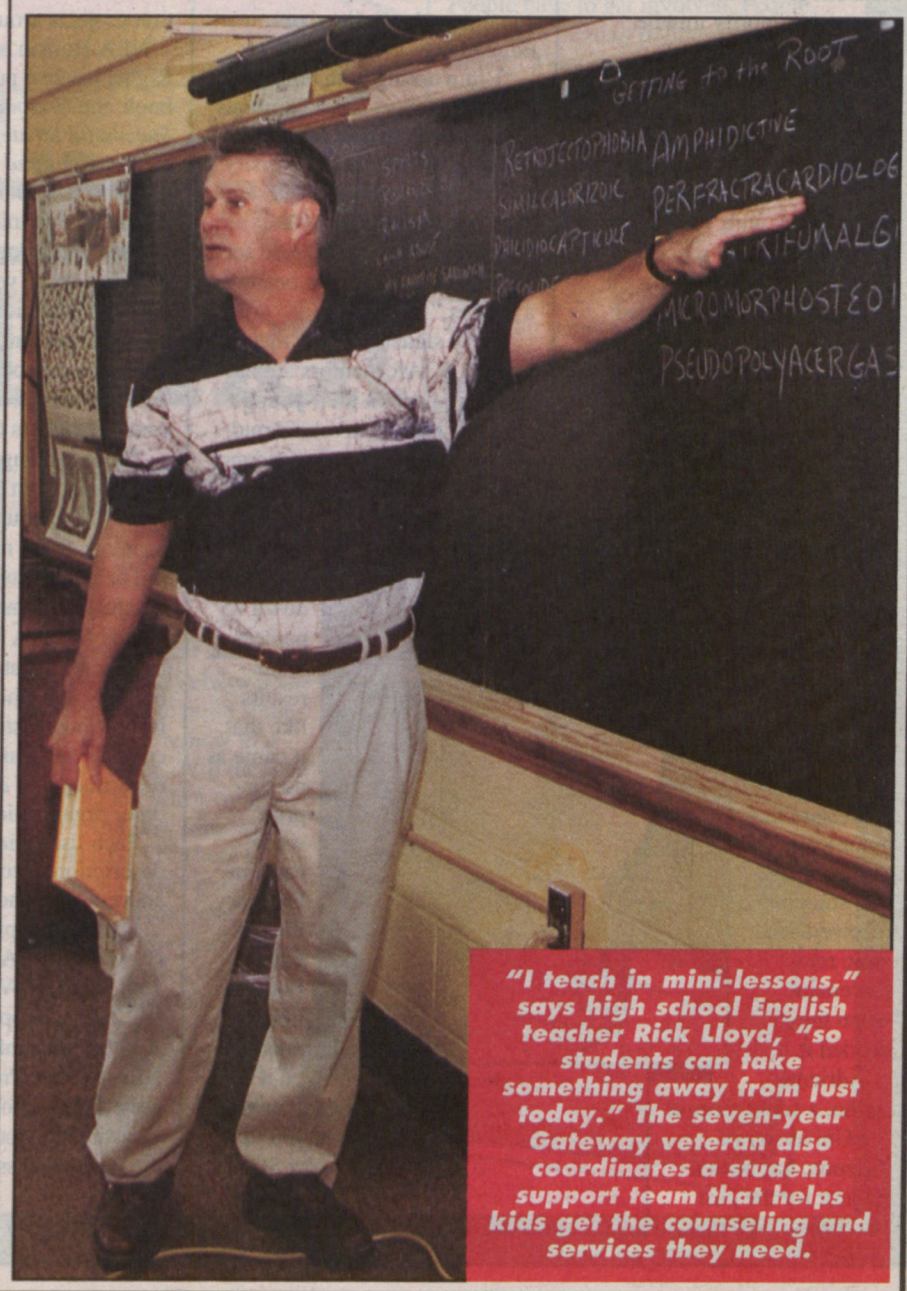
Those in favor say alternative schools—

- allow regular school teachers to focus on teaching, not discipline,
- give the problem kids the best chance for success, and
- are a good investment—compared with the cost to society of student failure, crime, and jails.

Those opposed say alternative schools—

- open the door to segregation based on both race and gender,
- pull kids away from positive role models,
- give teachers an easy way to avoid students they'd rather not deal with, and
- cost too much.

To add your perspective to the debate, check out the Safe and Secure Schools area on NEA's World Wide Web site (http://www.nea.org/resources/safe.html).



"I teach in mini-lessons," says high school English teacher Rick Lloyd, "so students can take something away from just today." The seven-year Gateway veteran also coordinates a student support team that helps kids get the counseling and services they need.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Planting the Seed

When it comes to recruiting minority teachers, sometimes a small grant from NEA yields big results.

In 1994, a chapter of the NEA Student Program at the University of Arizona College of Education got a $1,000 NEA grant to help launch a "Teachers of Tomorrow" club in Tucson middle schools.

That money—along with backing from the Tucson school district and Regina Serrano, director of the College's Office of Multicultural Recruitment and Retention—helped students start Project SOAR, Student Opportunity for Academic Renewal.

In its first year, the project paired University of Arizona student mentors—mostly from the College of Education—with 15 at-risk minority middle school students.

In 1995, the University students got a $2,800 NEA Student Program grant to expand their efforts to more schools. College students were able to work with 71 students from three middle schools.

Many of the adolescents the mentors worked with needed more than academic encouragement, so the project aligned with the local police department's family services unit, the county's juvenile court center, and several local community service and mental health organizations.

Tucson teachers got involved, too, working closely with the mentors and middle schoolers to make sure that homework was done and that students received academic reinforcement when they needed it.

Photographs by Katherine Gardiner

Adrienne Ariño, a college sophomore, says being a mentor cemented her desire to be a teacher.

Adrienne Ariño, a sophomore at the University of Arizona, has been a mentor for the past two years. "We make a real difference with these kids," Ariño says. "Since I've been involved with Project SOAR, I've decided that teaching is what I really want to do."

Lasheeka Timmons, a junior in the College of Education, believes mentoring has enriched her life.

Lasheeka Timmons is determined to be a teacher. A mentor for the past year and a half, Timmons grew up in a housing project in Phoenix. She was working as a teacher assistant for a summer recreation program called Steps for Success when several social workers told her she was a natural for teaching. Now she's a junior in the College of Education.

"I'm working with eighth grade girls this year," Timmons says. "I cook dinner for them, and take them to the university. To me, they're like little sisters. The time we spend together has helped motivate them to be serious students and me to become a teacher."

Early statistics show that Project SOAR mentors are having an impact on their young charges. For the involved middle schoolers, school attendance is up an average of 15 days, school suspensions are down 75 percent. With results like that, it came as no surprise when, early in February, the Coca Cola Foundation announced it would commit $100,000 to support SOAR. The money will help the program expand to include 120 eighth and ninth graders from six schools and 63 college student mentors.

"It's a fine day when NEA seed money helps a successful project like this one grow," says NEA-Student Program coordinator Dale Robinson. "Small grants are like small fish—when conditions are right, they attract larger ones."

Want to learn more about ethnic minority teacher recruitment and retention projects around the nation?

NEA Human and Civil Rights has just published a new book, the *National Directory of Successful Strategies for the Recruitment and Retention of Minority Teachers.*

The book's introduction paints a troubling picture. In the next five to 10 years, the public school population will become about 40 percent minority, while the number of minority teachers may drop from 10 percent of teachers to 5 percent.

Those looking to stop that projection from becoming reality will be encouraged by the contents of the new directory.

The book lists dozens of successful recruitment initiatives started by NEA state affiliates, local school districts and school buildings, teacher education institutions, historically Black colleges and universities, state departments of education, and other organizations.

Each listing includes a description, a contact name, address, and phone number.

For a free copy of the directory, write to NEA-HCR, 1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Supplies are limited. And for more information about NEA-Student Program grants, write to Dale Robinson, NEA Constituent Group Relations, at the same address.

—Melissa Etlin
NEA Human and Civil Rights

WASHINGTON WATCH

Schools Win Lane on Info Highway

Finally some good—no, great—education news from Washington.

The Telecommunications and Deregulation Act of 1995, signed February 8 by President Clinton, requires telecommunications carriers to offer discount rates to schools and libraries that connect to the Information Superhighway.

Moreover, the Act makes the non-profit National Education Technology Funding Corporation eligible to receive federal funds. That will enable NETFC to offer loans, loan guarantees, grants, and other assistance to states to stimulate public and private investment in learning technology infrastructure.

Credit Where Credit's Due

It wasn't easy winning school and library provisions in a telecommunications megabill covering everything from cable TV to burglar alarms. But NEA's research and vision earned it a seat at the drafting table.

"Not one of these provisions would have been in the final legislation without NEA's work," maintains Association lobbyist Carolyn Breedlove.

Stick Around—It's Not Over Yet

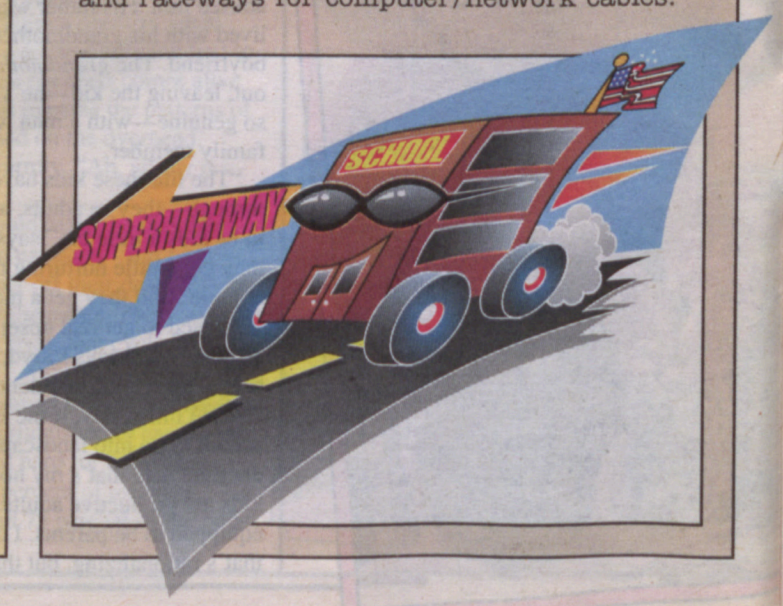
NEA's Breedlove urges educators to "stand by" if needed to help implement this law "to its maximum."

That may mean monitoring the Federal Communications Commission as it drafts rules and regulations and prodding state public utility commissions to set telecommunications rates that schools can truly afford.

And NEA may need to lobby the federal government to set aside a portion of "electromagnetic spectrum" sales proceeds for school technology.

Poli-Tidbit

In a 1995 survey of 10,000 U.S. schools, the Government Accounting Office found that 34.6 percent of the buildings had insufficient power for computers and communications technology, 46.1 percent had inferior wiring, and 60.6 percent had inadequate conduits and raceways for computer/network cables.



Meet:

Photographs by Joe Di Dio

Pat Schroeder

Goodbye To All That

Congresswoman Pat Schroeder (D-Colorado) opens the door, drinking coffee from a paper cup, and ushering visitors into an office crammed with upended trunks, photographs, signs, books, papers, even a sled mounted on the wall. "It's a junk shop," she jokes, pointing out a few of her favorite mementos.

After 24 years on Capitol Hill, Schroeder's stepping down. She's made her mark as a determined advocate for women and children—and as a politician quick with the quips. She spoke recently with NEA Today *assistant editor Stefanie Weiss.*

Off the top, when I say "Newt Gingrich," what do you say?
The boss. Boss Newt.
The Supreme Court?
I just see a blur.
President Clinton?
Young. People have been taken by his youth more than anything.
Hillary Clinton?
We're going to have a new word called "hillaried." They're making it into an art form—to get up and bash Hillary every day.
Women's rights?
In trouble. I see a big black hole opening up that women's rights are going to fall in—if we're not careful.
Civil rights?
Same. I see a big crack in the ground that some people would like to shove all these things into, pretend like they never happened.
Goals 2000?
Already in the hole.
The defense budget?
Whatever they want, then add some.
Children?
I see them stranded on an island with their government sailing away.

What do you mean by that?
The people in control here now are spending all their energy explaining how children are not the government's problem. They're sawing off that "connect" that we've tried to build and saying, "Well, we don't know where you go, but don't come here. Goodbye and good luck." And they smile as they say it.

It's almost become conventional wisdom that people shouldn't have children unless they can "afford them." By that, they mean provide health care, have somebody home all day to take care of them, provide a college education, and so forth. And so the corollary to all of that is: If you had children and you can't afford them, it's your problem.

That's really astounding. In other western countries, they don't see "your children." They see the nation's future. And they put the highest priority on investing in that future. Here, we put the lowest priority on it.

The Defense Department gets more money than it even asks for, and meanwhile we're stomping all over the Earned Income Tax Credit, which helps low-income working families. The message is: If you're poor, you're dirt.

Is that why you're leaving?
It's very hard to change from the inside when you have a group of zealots who spend their whole day making sure that none of them sells out. But that's not the whole reason I'm leaving, obviously. I've enjoyed this and way overstayed. I've been here much longer than I thought I'd ever be. Still, it's a concern: Will everything that I cared about—and did—get blown up?

Will it?
I hope not—but it takes so much less time to blow something up than to build something, and we're now in a blow-up mode. Will there be anything left when we get done? And how long will it take to rebuild? These are questions I really ponder.

If I had to say what's wrong with this place, I'd say it's become a coin-operated legislative machine. And that's why I'm so worried about it.

Who will pick up the baton after you leave?
There are people here who do care about children. Unfortunately, they're not the majority. We have to hope that 1996 brings some new faces. But it's not going to happen until people start figuring out who's for kids—and who's just kidding.

I can ask any class of third graders what is the best predictor of how a person will behave in office: how they voted or what they say in their commercials? Third graders never miss the question.

And yet everybody's voting by the commercials. If we let people in politics continue to define themselves, every politician is always going to be pro-child, pro-education, pro the environment, pro-woman, against the debt. No one's ever gotten elected by saying, "I don't think women ought to have any rights, and I'm not about to fund education."

But they're voting just the opposite way, because—guess what—all these things have gone down the chute. If people don't wake up and figure that out, and then go act on what every third grader knows, then we deserve what we get.

What needs to happen to build confidence in the political system?
People have to get involved. People have been treating politics like consumers. They sit around and say, "Nobody's perfect and I don't like politics, so I'm not going to vote."

Okay, no one's perfect—if we had angels, we wouldn't need government. But unlike consumers, who if they don't buy the product don't have to deal with the product, if we don't vote, we're still going to have to deal with who is elected.

And so if you have two candidates, and one is 60 percent on your issues and the other is a zero, and if you're honestly willing not to get involved in that mix-up and let the zero win, then don't come yelling to me.

Will you run for office again?
Could be. I really don't know. If I find that I can't be a recovering politician, I may have to do it again.

Grassroots

State

OHIO

The Ohio Education Association and NEA—joined by the ACLU and others—have filed suit against a state law authorizing private and religious school vouchers for up to 1,500 students in the Cleveland City district.

The plaintiffs charge that the statute violates the principle of church-state separation and that it was illegally bundled into the 1995 state budget law. The suit also maintains that the voucher law—funded by the diversion of sorely needed state aid for disadvantaged urban students—conflicts with the Ohio constitution.

MISSOURI

"We're not going to tolerate violent and disruptive students—period." Tough words from Governor Mel Carnahan, who recently put his money where his mouth is.

Carnahan proposed $16 million in new funding for safe schools and backed the Safe Schools Act, which includes 14 recommendations from a Missouri NEA task force. Among them: disclosure of illegal student conduct and alternative placement programs for disruptive students.

Missouri NEA staffer Bob Quinn reports that members are lobbying hard "to make this law happen."

PUERTO RICO

The Asociación de Maestros de Puerto Rico is gearing up for a drive to unionize up to 26,000 non-teaching school employees across the island. The Association is urging teacher members to sign up support employees and help build broad-based organizing committees.

Says Dr. Lizzette Pillich, AMPR's president for non-teaching personnel: "We're just a little group right now, so we have to work to be a larger group with the same power as teachers who've been organized 85 years."

MICHIGAN

Since last July, strikers at the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press* have faced union busting—scabs, goons, the works. But they're standing firm, publishing their own Sunday paper, and appealing for labor support.

Michigan Education Association members and staffers have responded by walking the newspaper picket line, donating money, and even "adopting" strikers' families. "With MEA support, we'll be able to last one day longer [than management]," writes one grateful recipient of Association aid.

IN CALIFORNIA

San Diego Teachers Win Big

Five years without a raise was just too much to ask. So, when talks stalled in early February, the more than 6,500 members of the San Diego Teachers Association voted to strike.

After five days on the picket line, teachers won a solid raise—14.7 percent over three years—and much more.

The new contract will bring:

- Removal of the district's proposed cap on benefits.
- An early retirement provision.
- $2 million for phones and phone lines in schools.
- Guarantees that teachers, parents, and community residents will have more decision-making power at the school building level.

That will help solidify a teacher-parent alliance that blossomed during the work stoppage, thanks to public resentment of the San Diego district's bloated bureaucracy and the school board's rough treatment of parents. (At one public meeting, microphones were turned off when parents tried to speak.)

"Our members' willingness to sacrifice for what they believe in is what made the difference," says local President Bill Crane. "Without our solidarity, we would have never won these important gains for our students and ourselves. Our next challenge is to carry this feeling of empowerment to the school sites."

San Diego is just one of several urban areas where NEA locals have faced districts determined to take back hard-won gains. Among others: Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Oakland (on strike at press time), and Portland, Oregon.

Photographs by Suzanne Emery

Top, San Diego Teachers Association members vote to reject the school district's contract offer during the second day of the five-day-long strike. Inset, a few days later, members okay a new pact that will boost salaries 15 percent over three years.

IN HAWAII

Huge Rallies In Hawaii Fight Cutbacks

Nearly 7,000 teachers, students, and university professors rallied outside the Hawaii State Capitol on the first day of the 1996 legislative session to stave off education cuts—in a state budget that is to be chopped by $200 million.

The turn-out at rallies on Maui, Kauai, Lanai, and Hawaii brought the total number of demonstrators to 8,500.

This year's proposed education cut comes on the heels of last year's, which trimmed public school funding by 3 percent and slashed higher education funds by 12 percent.

State budget woes are producing the need for cuts, but those who rallied made it clear they don't want them to come from education.

SAVE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITY
FROM 2ND TO NONE TO DEAD LAST
CUT THE BUDGET BY CUTTING WASTE
Don't CUT SHORT THEIR FUTURE
The CUTS STOP HERE!
CUT THE BUDGET BY CUTTING WASTE

HSTA

School, college, and university employees rally against proposed cuts of some $200 million. The rally was co-sponsored by the Hawaii State Teachers Association and the University of Hawaii Professional Assembly.

Says HSTA President June Motokawa: "Democracy isn't about getting what we want as individuals. It means working with others to do what's best for the larger '*Ohana*' [family], our island community.

"We all have a common interest in education. It's not just students or their parents," she adds. "Everyone in Hawaii benefits from a strong public education system."

At presstime, teachers and professors continued to lobby lawmakers. A final budget decision is expected in late April.

IN MAINE

Mark Blanchette

Ronald McDonald House

LENDING A HELPING HAND: When February rolled around in Bangor, Maine, these school employees (inset) just knew it was time to donate food for young patients and parents at the local Ronald McDonald House (pictured here). That's because the Bangor Education Association maintains a month-by-month "Charity Calendar," including everything from a spaghetti dinner for AIDS education to a food and linen drive for the Shaw House for abused and runaway teens. The calendar and members' community involvement last year made BEA the recipient of NEA's Rosena J. Willis Memorial Award for the "local affiliate with the most improved human relations program."

STATE SIDE

Teacher Salary Average Now $37,000

Fifteen states, led by Connecticut, now top the 1994-95 national average teacher salary of $36,874, according to NEA Research. This represents a 3 percent increase, about $1,000, over the 1993-94 average salary. Maryland and California dropped out of this year's top ten, replaced by Illinois and Rhode Island.

Average Teacher Salary, 1994-95

CONNECTICUT	$50,045
ALASKA	47,951
NEW YORK	47,612
MICHIGAN	47,412
NEW JERSEY	46,087
PENNSYLVANIA	44,510
DIS. OF COL.	42,959
MASSACHUSETTS	42,174
ILLINOIS	41,041
RHODE ISLAND	40,729
CALIFORNIA	40,667
MARYLAND	40,636
DELAWARE	39,076
OREGON	38,870
HAWAII	38,518
WISCONSIN	37,746
UNITED STATES	36,874
INDIANA	36,799
OHIO	36,788
VERMONT	36,311
WASHINGTON	36,160
MINNESOTA	35,948
NEVADA	34,836
NEW HAMPSHIRE	34,720
KANSAS	34,652
COLORADO	34,571
VIRGINIA	33,753
FLORIDA	32 588
TENNESSEE	32,477
KENTUCKY	32,257
GEORGIA	32,198
ARIZONA	32,175
MAINE	31,972
WEST VIRGINIA	31,944
IOWA	31,511
WYOMING	31,285
TEXAS	31,223
MISSOURI	31,186
ALABAMA	31,144
NEBRASKA	30,922
NORTH CAROLINA	30,793
SOUTH CAROLINA	30,120
IDAHO	29,783
UTAH	28,919
NEW MEXICO	28,865
MONTANA	28,785
ARKANSAS	28,409
OKLAHOMA	27,971
MISSISSIPPI	26,818
LOUISANA	26,566
NORTH DAKOTA	26,327
SOUTH DAKOTA	25,994

NEA Research, *Estimates data bank.*

Local

TEXAS

The Fort Worth Education Association's Strategic Planning Committee is interviewing *everyone* in the city, from educators to business leaders. The goal: Collect the data needed to prioritize Association plans and activities.

FWEA leaders are learning that the public is "satisfied overall with the school district and is very dependent on us to find out what is happening in education," says local President Ginger Shackelford.

NORTH CAROLINA

The Guilford Association of Educators wants to help new teachers get off to a good start.

With funding from an NEA Urban Grant, GAE and the district will conduct a four-day seminar at the start of the 1996-97 school year for both first-year and second-year teachers. Seminar topics will include classroom management, parent-teacher conferences, and cultural diversity. In addition, the local will provide mentoring and staff development.

Says project coordinator Joan Bass: "We're dealing with more difficult circumstances in teaching than ever before, so we want to assist new teachers as much as we can."

NEW JERSEY

The Lawrence Township Education Association has stopped the subcontracting of 44 custodial jobs by "reaching out big time" to the community. The 400-member local petitioned residents and spoke against privatization during school board meetings and even "Back-to-School" nights.

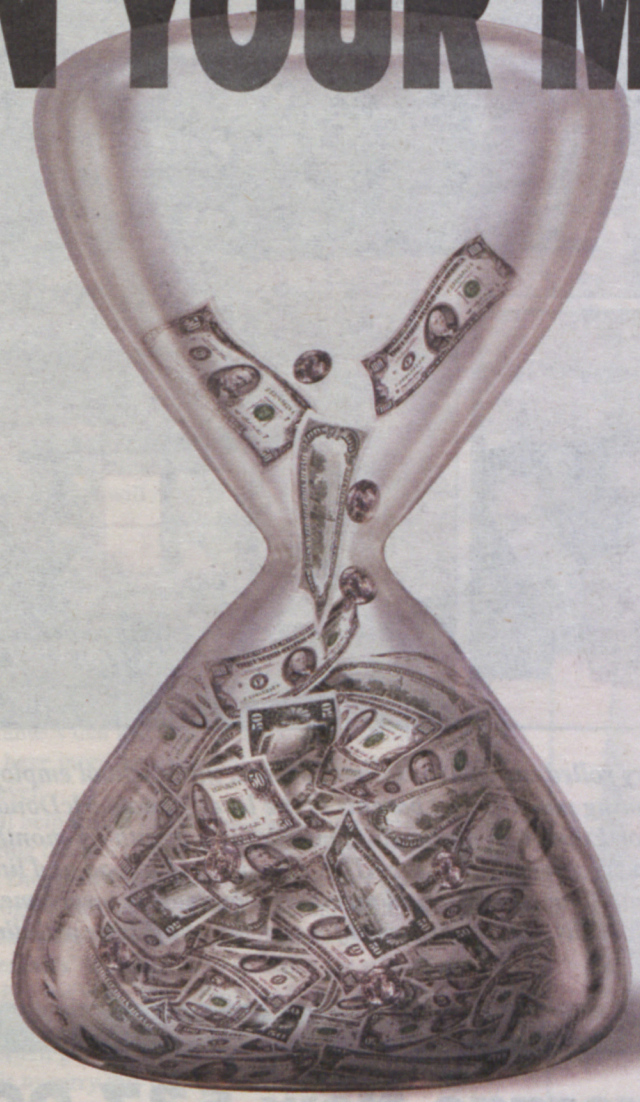
The payoff: The board agreed to contract language requiring the district to pay one year's salary as severance to any employee who loses a job as a result of privatization. And the custodians are still doing what *they* do best—keeping Lawrence schools in tip-top shape.

IOWA

The Burlington Education Association has pledged $1,000 to hire much-needed crossing guards at six key intersections. Last fall, three elementary school students were struck by cars.

"We're concerned that some kids are going to get seriously hurt if we don't get crossing guards," stresses BEA officer Jim Upton. "We can't forget that the most important people here are the kids."

YOUR RETIREMENT COULD LAST LONGER THAN YOUR MONEY



Plan for more security – call today for your FREE NEA Valuebuilder Retirement Planning Kit.

Experts report that many Americans are *not* adequately planning for their retirement, and will *not* be able to maintain their standard of living once they retire. Don't leave your future security at risk. Call today for your free NEA Valuebuilder Retirement Planning Kit to find out just how easy it is to plan for a more secure, comfortable retirement.

Your free kit will help you set your retirement goals and invest to meet them — so you can enjoy the retirement you deserve. The NEA Valuebuilder Annuity Program is a tax-advantaged annuity developed especially for NEA members and exclusively sponsored by the NEA.

To receive your free, no-obligation Planning Kit, call toll free **1-800-637-4636**

(Monday-Friday, 8 am - 8 pm; Saturday 9 am - 1 pm, ET).

The NEA Valuebuilder Annuity

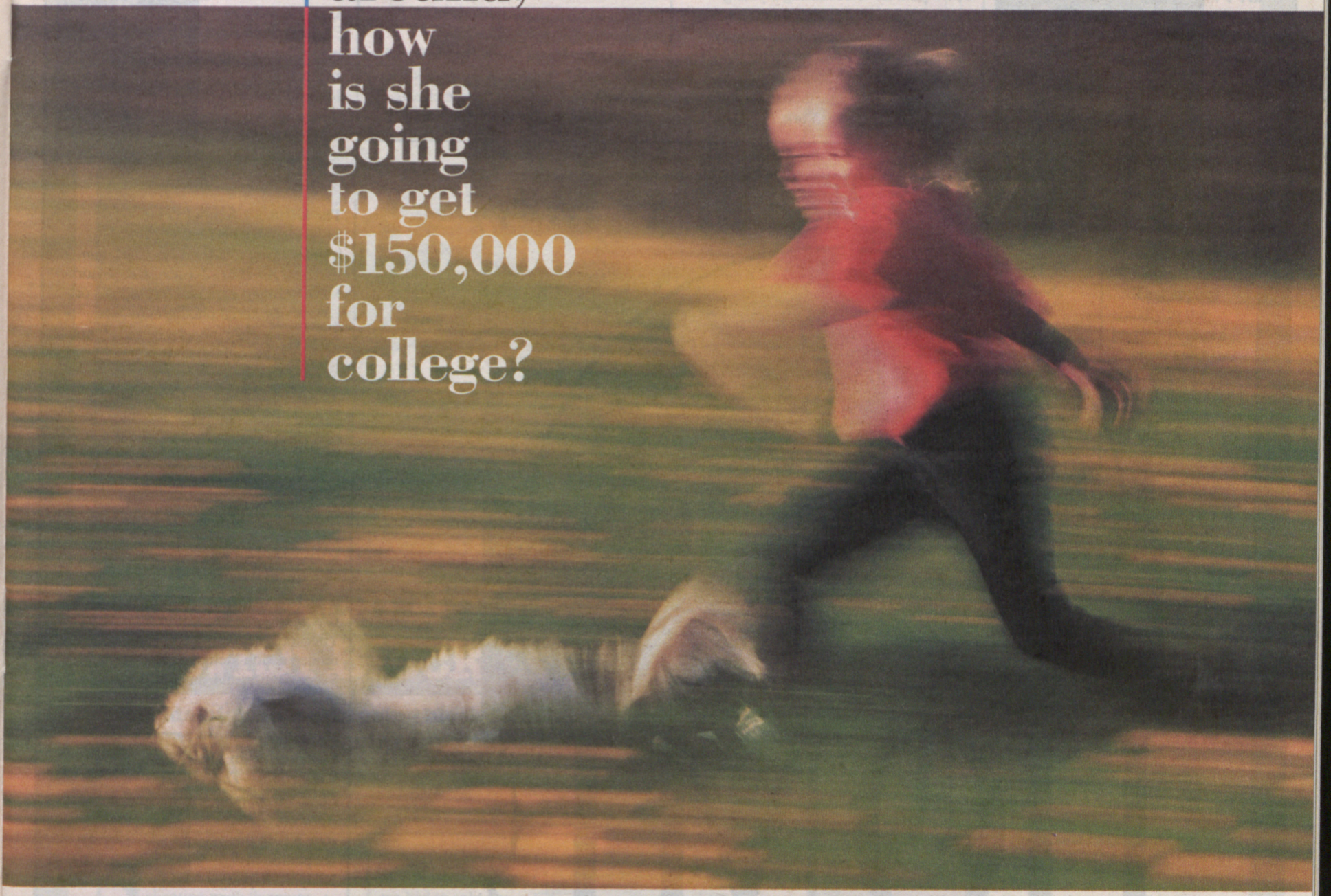
PLANNING FOR A MORE SECURE RETIREMENT.

NEA Valuebuilder Annuity | nea Member Benefits | NATIONWIDE INSURANCE

For more complete information about the NEA Valuebuilder® Annuity, including charges and expenses, you may obtain a prospectus from NEA Member Benefits, P.O. Box 576, Oakland, MD 21550-9972. Please read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money. The general distributor for the NEA Valuebuilder is Nationwide Financial Services, Inc., Columbus Ohio. Nationwide Financial Services and Nationwide Life are both subsidiaries of Nationwide Corporation, a financial services holding company. The Internal Revenue Code prohibits certain distributions attributable to salary reduction contributions before an individual reaches the age of 59½, separates from service, dies, or becomes disabled or experiences a hardship as defined by the Code. Nationwide® is a registered federal service mark of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company.

TVB046

If you're not around, how is she going to get $150,000 for college?



Chances are, you took out life insurance to protect your child's future. If so, then you'll want to know this.

For today's seven-year old, four years at a private college will cost $150,253.* The culprit? Inflation. It's inescapable. But not insurmountable.

You can economically *supplement* your life insurance with the NEA Home Protection Plan†. It's a decreasing term life insurance plan your family can use to help pay for expenses like college tuition or a mortgage. That way, your family can use your primary insurance to help maintain their standard of living.

While inflation can rob you of future buying power, it doesn't have to rob your child of a future college education.

*The College Board 1993–1994 survey

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

nea Member Benefits

Underwritten by The Prudential
The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, New Jersey 07102-3777

NEA Home Protection

For the times you need life insurance most

For a free quote, call: **1-800-637-4636**
Mon-Fri, 8 am to 8 pm; or Sat, 9 am to 1 pm (ET).

Contract Form Number 83500 COV 1004
THP046

The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, New Jersey 07102-3777.

†This NEA Home Protection Insurance Plan has certain limitations and exclusions. For costs and complete details of the coverage, please call 1-800-637-4636.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

Court TV Kids—*Court TV, Saturdays, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. ET.* This new series explores the justice system for a young audience. *Court TV* anchor Carol Randolph (left) hosts one episode.

Please God, I'm Only 17—*CBS, April 9, 4-5 p.m. ET.* Recounting a young man's tragic car accident, this show highlights the personal responsibility that comes with driving a motor vehicle. For a free study guide, contact CBS Community and Educational Services, 51 W. 52nd St., New York, NY 10019.

Chicano!—*PBS, Friday, April 12 and 19, 9-11 p.m. ET (check local listings).* Four one-hour shows—on land, labor, education reform, and political empowerment—document the events between 1965 and 1975 that formed the Mexican-American civil rights movement.

Healing the Hate—*USA, April 17 and 18, 4 a.m. ET.* This show examines hate messages and their destructive effects. The goal: to empower young people to speak out against them.

Scott Ross: Violence in America—*The Family Channel, April 19, 4-5 a.m. ET.* Host Scott Ross takes a look at the increasing incidence of violent crimes against women and the attendant rise in classroom violence.

The History Channel Presents: Jerusalem with Martin Gilbert—*History Channel, April 20, 10-11 p.m, repeated April 21, 2-3 a.m. ET.* Historian Martin Gilbert explores Jerusalem's origins. Using aerial photography and meticulous scale models, he shows how the city grew in biblical times and how it has fared since.

Wild Things: An Earth Day Special—*ABC, Saturday, April 20, 12:30-1 p.m. ET.* This special includes segments on baby animal predators, migration, speed and locomotion, and how to save endangered species. For a free subscription to the ABC Classroom Connection, produced by KIDSNET, call 800/647-4ABC.

The Year in Space—1995—*Sci-Fi Channel, April 21, 5:30-6:00 a.m. ET.* This compilation of last year's space-related action includes visits to the Mir Space Station and shots from the Galileo probe to Jupiter.

Captains Courageous in the Classroom—*The Family Channel, April 26, 3:30-5 a.m. ET.* In this adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's classic, Harvey Cheyne experiences a sense of family and friendship aboard a fishing schooner—and learns that there are things money can't buy. To get a free 24-page teacher's guide for grades 4-12, contact The Family Channel, CIC Dept., P.O. Box 2050, Virginia Beach, VA 23450.

Listings provided by KIDSNET, a Washington, D.C.-based clearinghouse for children's programming.

Ahead on *Teacher TV*

Looking for some proven classroom strategies? Then tune in to *Teacher TV*, the award-winning weekly magazine-style program coproduced by NEA and the Learning Channel. *Teacher TV* airs Sundays at 12:30 p.m. ET. This month:

April 7: Whole Village, Whole Child
April 14: Overlooked Students
April 21: Site-Based Decision Making
April 28: Teaching the Academically Diverse Classroom

FEEL RIGHT AT

HOME
WITH YOUR
NEA HOMEOWNERS

Enjoy new MEMBER-ONLY benefits with the NEA Homeowners Insurance Program:

- coverage for loss of school fund-raising cash or goods held by an NEA member,
- computer equipment coverage during off-premise educational activities,
- reduced deductible after four loss-free years, and
- increased business property coverage on member's insured premises.

To receive more information about these and other special benefits of the NEA Homeowners Insurance Program, call your Horace Mann agent or the toll-free service line, 1-800-999-1030 and press "4", 7 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. Central Time.

This program is not available in every state. Please check with your state association for details.

nea Member Benefits

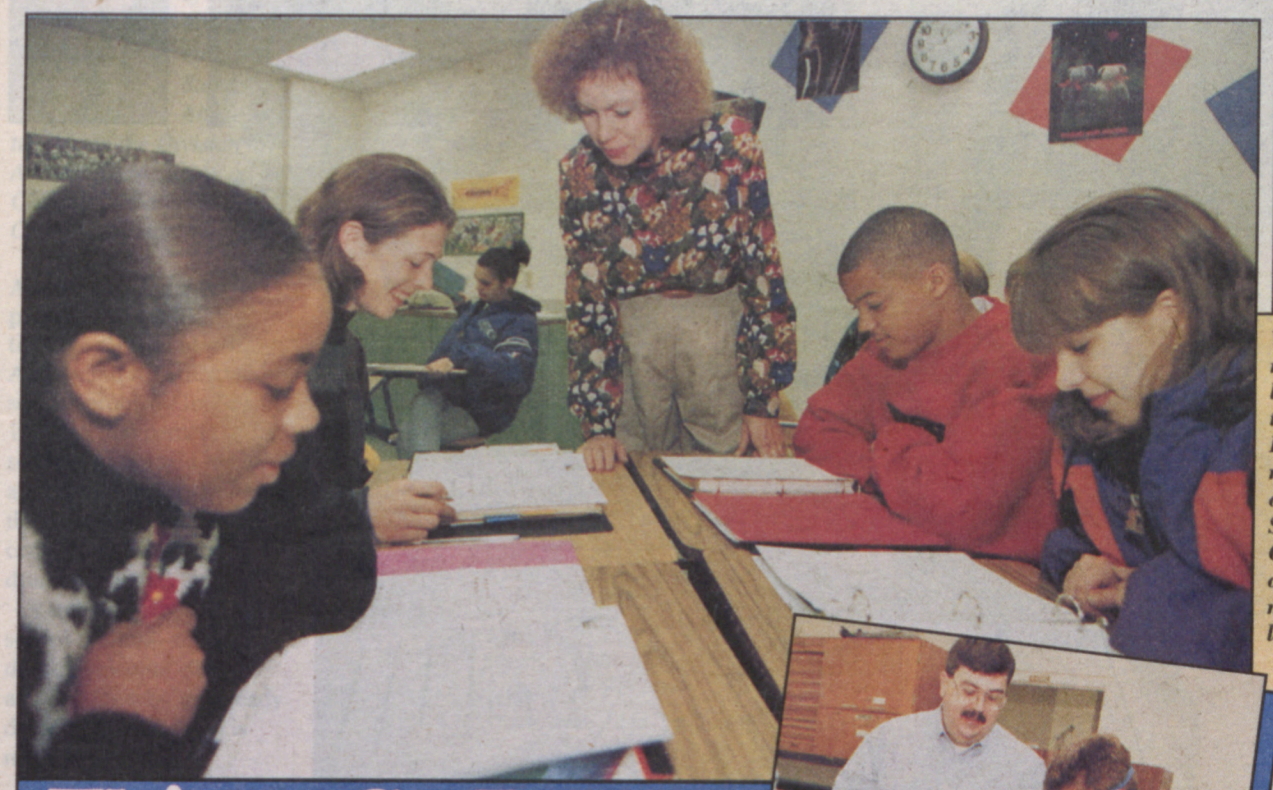
Horace Mann®
Insuring America's Educational Community

Underwritten by
Horace Mann Insurance Company
Teachers Insurance Company

TH0046

Innovation

How NEA members are changing the way schools work



With an 85-minute period, language arts teacher Lynn Hartley, top, has more time for student group work. Science teacher Chris Pryor, middle, uses the extra minutes to finish labs and debrief students.

Things Go Better With Blocks

Florida high school is using block scheduling to create richer learning opportunities and boost student achievement. It's all about better use of time.

No one could have predicted that Jim Devine would start chanting math theorems Gregorian-style in front of high schoolers. For 20 years, this math and geometry teacher was Mr. Direct Instruction: Follow my lecture and keep those eyes on your own paper.

But today Devine supplements his lectures with a bit of chant, a little quiet work, some role playing, a dollop of math history, and plenty of student group work.

Where does he find the time? Not in the traditional 50-minute period. Teachers at the Flagler Palm Coast High School—in Bunnell, Florida—have *made* time for themselves by converting to a "4x4" block schedule.

Here's how it works: There are just four 85-minute periods or "blocks" in a school day. Each staffer teaches three courses and uses the fourth block—all 85 minutes—as a planning period. Students take four courses per term (18 weeks), two terms a year.

While the 4x4 schedule isn't perfect, teachers say it does offer them the "luxury of time."

Now, says science teacher Chris Pryor, "we have time to actually finish a lab that we had to split up under the seven-period day."

And marine biology teacher Dora Wacker says she's got time for field trips—for projects like environmental testing of nearby Gore Lake.

Having more time means less stress for students and teachers alike. Both prepare for three classes a day—not the previous seven—and nobody rushes to beat the buzzer.

On the flip side, having more class time challenges teachers to find the best ways to use it. "You must have in-service training before you get into block scheduling," warns language arts teacher Lynn Hartley.

"If you're not prepared to change your teaching style," she explains, "you won't hold students' attention for 85 minutes. You need a variety of activities to keep them moving, or boredom will set in."

Special education teacher Michelle McCraney, above, says block scheduling "empowers students to be responsible for their own learning."

One boredom-buster you'll see all over Flagler Palm Coast is an exercise called the "jigsaw." Students form "home" groups, leave them to join "expert" groups and learn a subject in depth, and then rejoin their home groups to teach other students what they've learned.

The jigsaw is an effective teaching tool—staffers maintain that students retain 95 percent of what they teach others. An added bonus: the jigsaw throws together kids from diverse backgrounds—migrants from the Northeast, children of cabbage and potato farmers, African-Americans, Hispanics, and even surfer dudes.

"These kids are forced to talk to one another," says principal Larry Hunsinger. "Cooperative learning breaks down a lot of barriers."

That applies equally to the barriers between teachers and kids. English teacher Paula Gordon points out that the longer period and smaller student count over the term—75 to 80 kids—"fosters intimacy in the classroom, less distance."

Says Gordon: "This schedule allows you to sit down with groups and get to know students better. I don't find too many kids you can't connect with in some way."

The results of all this intimacy and immersion? Flagler Palm Coast leads Florida high schools in college enrollment. What's more, 84 percent of its students graduate, 50 percent make the honor role, and 95 percent show up each day—to a school five minutes from the beach.

Junior Dana Baker thinks the block schedule is "more fun. There's not as much homework as before, when you just sat in your seat and crammed. I really like it!"

—Dave Winans

For more information on what's happening at Flagler Palm Coast High School, contact Larry Hunsinger at P.O. Box 488, Bunnell, FL 32110. Phone: 904/437-7540. Fax: 904/437-7546.

➤ To learn how the "4x4" block schedule works at Wasson High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, read *Time Strategies,* one of NEA's Teacher-to-Teacher books. To order ($9.95 plus s&h), call the NEA Professional Library at 800/229/4200. Stock #2902-X-00-F. And visit Wasson's Worldwide Web homepage. The address is (http://www.wentworth.com/classweb/myhome.html).

➤ Watch for the NEA Professional Library's summer release of *Moving to the Block*, a checklist for preparing to teach in extended periods of learning time. Call 800/229-4200 to reserve a copy.

Is there actually life insurance that's free to NEA members for 6 months?

Absolutely.

That's right. You get up to $25,000 of life insurance—and *the first six months of coverage are on us*—the NEA Members Insurance Trust®. You pay nothing whatsoever.

What policy gives you this? It's called NEA Level Premium Decreasing Term Life Insurance. It's a long name, but the word to remember is "level." You get an affordable group rate that, unlike most insurance rates, will stay exactly the same until age 70.

And once you've enjoyed six months of free coverage, you can simply charge your premiums to your credit card. So what starts out free, then becomes easy. It's also easy to request enrollment. Send in the coupon or call toll free for an enrollment form.

NEA Level Premium Term Life—it's free for the first 6 months.

NEA
Level Premium
Term Life Insurance

1-800-637-4636
Mon-Fri, 8 am to 8 pm; or
Sat, 9 am to 1 pm (ET)

☐ Yes, I want life insurance that's free to me for the first 6 months. Send me an enrollment form right way for NEA Level Premium Term Life Insurance. (This insurance has certain limitations and exclusions. For costs and complete details of the coverage, contact NEA Member Benefits Representatives toll free at **1-800-637-4636**.)

Name _____ Social Security Number _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please mail to: **NEA Member Benefits**
P.O. Box 576, Oakland MD 21550-9972

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

nea Member Benefits

Underwritten by The Prudential
The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, New Jersey 07102-3777

The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, NJ 07102-3777

Contract Form 83500 COV 1004 TLP046

Health

Information about health factors that affect the way students learn

Richard Heyman, M.D., chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Substance Abuse, also teaches in the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati.

DRIVEN to DRINK

Alcohol abuse by teenagers is down slightly, but alcohol is still most teens' drug of choice.

Are we making any progress in combating teenage alcohol abuse?
A little, but it's still a very serious problem. In the mid 1980s, 5 to 6 percent of high school seniors said they used alcohol every day. In 1995, that was down to 3.5 percent, with 1 to 2 percent drunk every day.

Remember, these are high school seniors—the incidence of alcohol abuse among kids who've already dropped out of school is much higher.

Does alcohol abuse lead to many teenage deaths?
We've actually made some progress in terms of alcohol-related deaths in the last several years. Public education and public awareness have probably helped, as has lowering the blood alcohol level for a driving under the influence (DUI) arrest. But alcohol is still a major cause of death among teens.

What drives a teenager to drink?
Some kids start because they're a little rebellious. Others start because they're offered alcoholic beverages by a friend or an adult. And some drink because it's portrayed as absolutely normal by the media, by advertising agencies, and by the sports industry.

Kids who are chronically depressed, have been abused, or who have poor self-esteem are likely to use alcohol and drugs to make themselves feel better.

"Image gap" is a term that's been coined to provide an interesting explanation for why some kids begin to use alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

The bigger the gap between how a teenager sees himself and how he wishes he looks, acts, or seems, the more likely he is to need something to fill that gap. A lot of kids choose alcohol and drugs to do that.

Is teen drinking addictive?
When kids start to use alcohol, they're in an experimental phase. They're curious about what alcohol does and want to experience what it's like to be under the influence of alcohol. So it doesn't start out as an addiction, but it can develop into a psychological addiction very quickly.

What are the signs of alcohol abuse in teenagers?
Mood swings are among the first symptoms that we see in teenagers who are using alcohol—or any other drug, for that matter.

Sometimes kids appear to be totally out of it, blank, and not in touch with their environment. At other times, they seem very intense and angry. This quickly can become associated with changes in school, job performance, friends, interests, and overall changes in their behavior, personality, and physical appearance. But there may be no overt symptoms or signs.

Do teens who drink excessively tend to have a lot of liver or kidney problems?
Interestingly enough, usually not. Alcohol is a depressant. It slows down the brain metabolism, delays the thought processes, and slows down reaction time. But kids can use alcohol over a fairly protracted period of time and at fairly high levels and not have liver problems or hepatitis. Those conditions take years to develop in people. So, in general, we don't see them in teenagers.

Does drinking lead kids to use harder drugs?
It sure does. Alcohol and tobacco are gateway drugs to marijuana and harder drugs. It's hard to know whether it's the alcohol that opens the gateway or whether kids who are susceptible to drug use are more likely to start with alcohol. But we know alcohol and tobacco are markers for drug use and other risk-taking behaviors in the future.

Are there times in the school year when kids are more likely to abuse alcohol?
There certainly are blips, no question about that. Alcohol is used more in warmer weather and at party times such as the prom and graduation.

Certainly, the number of drunk driving accidents goes up seasonably. But kids who are abusers of alcohol can start at any time, and once they start, they continue without a whole lot of regard for the season.

Are there differences between teen and adult drinking patterns?
Yes. Adults who use beer responsibly, for example, use it to quench their thirst and to feel good. But kids who drink beer don't drink it to quench their thirst or to feel good—they drink it to get smashed. Unlike most adults, kids drink to get drunk.

What can educators do to discourage drinking?
Take a look at what causes kids to start using alcohol and tobacco—I throw tobacco in there because the vast majority of kids who drink also smoke.

When you do, you'll see that the kids who tend to experiment with drugs are kids who may be unhappy with who they are. As educators, we need to help kids feel good about themselves, develop interests and talents, and help them believe in themselves, so they don't have to change who they are. We can help them close that image gap.

THE FACTS:

- 87 percent of high school seniors say they've used alcohol.
- Junior and senior high school students drink 35 percent of all wine coolers sold in the United States. They also consume 1.1 billion cans of beer.
- Two out of three teens who drink say they can buy their own alcoholic beverages.
- Of kids under 18 in state-operated juvenile institutions, 31.9 percent were under the influence of alcohol at the time they were arrested.
- In 1991, more than 126,000 people admitted to state-funded alcohol treatment programs were under the age of 21.

Source: National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence

©1996 style.com, Inc. All title, format, style, fashion and characters are registered trademarks of style.com, Inc. All textile designs are designed to be accessible to the blind and disabled. To learn more, e-mail us at info@style.com or call 800-755-0661.

At age 8,

Amy Tan

discovered

a way to

communicate

with the

world.

For her eighth birthday, Amy was given a set of beautiful colored pencils. On the pencils, in bright gold, was her name: Amy Tan. To Amy, the pencils seemed magical, for whenever she used them, she wrote very personal, imaginative things.

Years later, Amy also discovered that, by writing about her own culture, she could explain it in terms that people from all backgrounds could understand.

As Amy first learned to communicate with others using her special pencils, students today can use Macintosh® computers.

A Mac™ makes it easy to connect via the Internet with other students all over the world. In the process, they discover a few small differences. But more important, they discover the overwhelming similarities that unite all of us.

Today, more schools are using Apple® Macintosh computers to help students make their own important discoveries.

IDEA EXCHANGE

Travels with Teddy

Back in September, my team-teaching colleague Julie Schumacher and I bought 52, five-inch teddy bears—one for each student in our K-1st grade classroom. We gave each bear to someone in our community who was traveling out of town and instructed that person to send the class a postcard from where he or she was going and give the bear to another traveler with the same instructions. We kept a log of each new traveler.

By February, we'd received some 500 postcards from such faraway locations as Croatia, Singapore, China, and Australia—52 countries and 49 states in all. Some sent souvenirs—an oil lamp from Oman, shells from Washington State, classroom news from second graders in Iowa.

We keep a map of the U.S. and the world with pins to designate our bears' ports of call, and we maintain a large photo album for the postcards.

Our instructions call for the peripatetic teddies to return home by May 17, when they'll be greeted by our geography-savvy students.

Donna Griswold
Uwchlin Hill Elementary School
Downington, Pennsylvania

Can It

When I need to select students for various activities in my third grade classroom, I draw a name from a can designed for that purpose alone. Each student's name is written on the sort of key tag that's available from office supply stores and hardware stores. I use a decorative can with a lid—the kind candy might come in at holiday time. The metal on the edge of the paper key tag makes a neat sound in the metal can when I shake it. It catches everyone's attention and helps create a little suspense. The students themselves will often reach for the can when they have to choose a helper.

Colene Acker
Northside Elementary School
Middleton, Wisconsin

Toying with Technology

To introduce my eighth and ninth grade tech ed students to manufacturing technology, I have them design jigs and fixtures to mass produce wooden toys, including three models of toy trucks.

For starters, students form a company. I appoint managers to organize the project. The rest of the students take jobs as designers, builders, machine operators, painters, and so forth. I teach them how to build a jig that won't clog up with sawdust and how the small point of a nail can keep a piece stable while drilling a hole. As I stress important design criteria, the class becomes quite proficient.

Mass production has a lot of possibilities for classroom instruction. And making it interesting to students expecting a traditional shop class is a challenge that continues to motivate me.

Steve Linley
Central Intermediate School
Midland, Michigan
linleysa@cris.com

Recreating the Rainforest

Each year, I involve all my ninth-grade earth science and biology students in a three-week, interdisciplinary, and intergenerational project in which they turn the classroom into a three-dimensional rainforest.

I assign two groups of students to design and create the rain forest. They prepare life-size monkeys, snakes, and other animals out of papier-mâché and simulate the flora with green and brown tissue paper. Others assigned to an audiovisual group record each class's progress with photographs and video. After the project is complete, they assemble an audiovisual program that's viewed by all who enter the rainforest.

Those assigned to the public relations group write letters to the Brazilian embassy and environmental groups to learn more about rainforests and prep the room for the Rainforest Gala—the night when parents take the tour. Students in the educational group give a guided tour—complete with games, stories, and fun facts—to elementary students. During each class, students record their activities and communicate their messages to the next class on a computer log.

Many of the students involved say the project got them more interested in science and made them look more forward to coming to class.

Ann Margaret Steelman
Hammond High School
Columbia, Maryland
asulliv@jacks.gsfc.nasa.gov

Share *Your* Ideas

You can pass along your classroom tips to *NEA Today*'s 2.2 million readers in one of these four ways:

➤By mail to Idea Exchange, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St. N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
➤By phone, 202/822-7201.
➤By fax, 202/822-7206.
➤By NEA Online, keyword *NEA Today*.

EDUCATION MARKETPLACE

CONTINUING EDUCATION

ARE YOU ON-LINE?
On-Line Courses for Teachers
• Start any time • University credit
• One year to finish • Great courses...
For more information:
WWW-http://www.hol.edu
e-mail: mail@hol.edu
Phone: 1-800-445-1305
Heritage On-Line
Exploring the Internet for Teaching and Learning

TRAVEL

Educators Bed & Breakfast Network. $27 a night for two. Private travel network with 2800 members in 36 countries. Box 5279, Eugene, OR 97405. 800/377-3480. Homepage: http://www.efn. org/~edbabnet.

INDIA, NEPAL, TIBET, BHUTAN. Valued-priced summer tours. For free catalog call 800/666-9464. Spectrum International Tours.

Europe by bicycle. Easy paced vacation. Enjoyable, relaxing. Free HBT brochure. 800/852-3258.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS

Trauma in Children, a video for schools. Features 5 noted specialists. $100. 800/888-5236.

COMPUTERS

Do your grades on computer. *TS Gradebook* 2.2 for Windows. Call 800/393-3415. Free Demo!

EMPLOYMENT

Jobs for teachers/principals. Send SASE to NTC, Box 1257, Boston, MA 02118-1257. 617/267-3204.

Teaching opportunities: Most comprehensive, timely catalog of all teaching & adminstrative lic school jobs. More info. 800/969-4001.

Education Jobs-Nationwide. New lists weeks. K-12 & college. All subjects. Send SASE to: NESC., Dept., NEA, POB 1279, Riverton, WY 82501. 307/856-0170.

TRAVEL/STUDY

•VIETNAM•
Lewis&Clark College Sum /winter
***Earn** 2 Grad Degr.Credits/transferbl
***Explore** the land, people, history & culture of this fascinating country.
Dr. Tran @EWER (503)257-5103
PO Box 16612 Portland OR 97216

FINANCIAL

The NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD is exclusively for NEA members. It offers higher interest, FDIC safety, and guaranteed returns. Call NEA Financial Services at 800/348-4632 for current rates and to request an application.

PUBLICATIONS CATALOG

New 64-page Catalog from the NEA Professional Library Now Available

The new, expanded, 64-page 1996 Catalog is now available from the NEA Professional Library. It lists over 200 professional development resources for classroom teachers and support personnel including these top new titles:

- *Portfolio Practices*
- *Professional Development Schools*
- *Beyond Textbooks*
- *Interactive Learning in Higher Education Classrooms*
- *Integrated Thematic Teaching*
- *The Healthy School Handbook*
- *Multiple Intelligences*
- *and many more*

To receive your copy, give us your name and address by calling toll-free 1-800-229-4200 or writing NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.

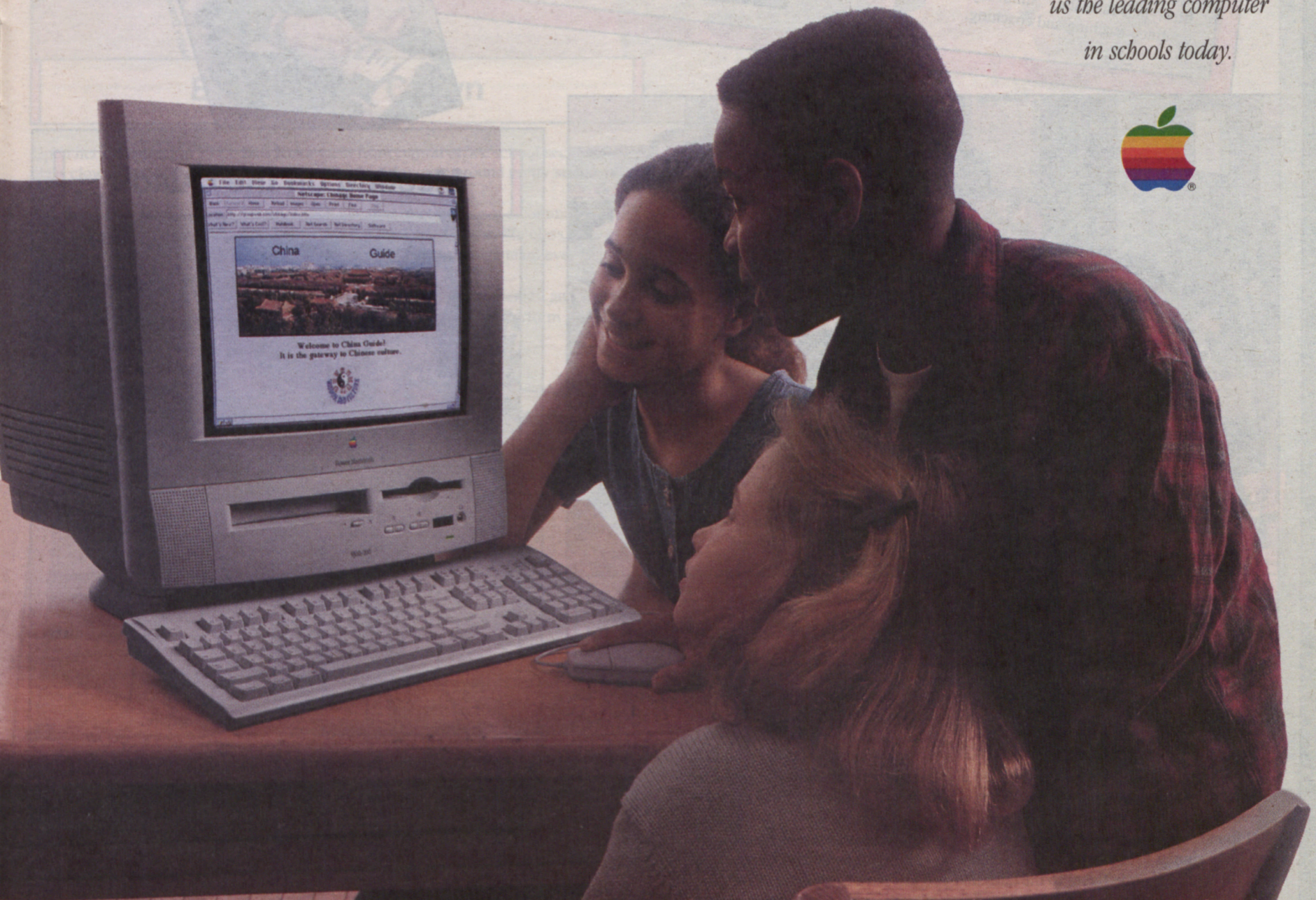
To place an Education Marketplace advertisement...Just send in your notice, with appropriate payment, to Education Marketplace at the address below. Rates: Educational Products/Services and Academic Employment Opportunities Categories: $115 per line; 3 line minimum. Display ads—$895 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Consumer Products/Services, Summer Employment, and Business Opportunities Categories: $130 per line; 3 line minimum. Display ads—$1155 per column inch, 5-inch maximum. Deduct 10% if you're an NEA member. Please count 30 characters per line (including spaces and punctuation). Contact NEA TODAY Education Marketplace, 1201 16th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20036; 202/822-7913.

With Apple's learning tools, your students can discover just about anything.

We make it easy to access the Internet. Each new Power Mac™ comes with the Apple® Internet Connection Kit, complete with Claris® Emailer,™ NewsWatcher and the Netscape graphical web browser–so your class can effortlessly tap into hundreds of web sites (including Amy Tan's).

On the Internet, your students can exchange mail and collaborate with other students all over the world. They can access articles, photos and sound bites from on-line magazines, libraries and web sites. All your class needs is a Mac,™ a modem and a phone line, and you're ready to connect.

As an educator, you can access information on any subject to help with your lessons. Plus you can go to Apple's web site, which offers details on different Apple products, as well as education research reports, pricing information and Apple's Internet newsletter for educators. It's all part of a long-standing commitment to education that's made us the leading computer in schools today.



For more information, visit us on the Internet at http://www.info.apple.com/education or call us at 800-800-APPL (2775).

©1996 Apple Computer, Inc. All rights reserved. Apple, the Apple logo and Macintosh are registered trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc. Mac and Power Mac are trademarks of Apple Computer, Inc.
Claris is a registered trademark and Emailer is a trademark of Claris Corporation. All Macintosh computers are designed to be accessible to individuals with disability. To learn more (U.S. only), call 800-600-7808 or TTY 800-755-0601.
To visit Amy Tan's web page: http://www.putnam.com/putnam/books/hundred_secret_senses/book.html

People

Boss on Marathons

The race—part of last summer's Indigenous Games—started in Canada and ended in Minnesota. For her part of the relay, Minnesota physical education teacher **Barb Smith** carried a sacred lance, a cylinder decorated with feathers and an eagle's claw that must never touch the ground.

Given her commitment to running and her pride in her Native American heritage, Smith was a natural to coach the five-member Wings of America girls' track team (pictured here) for the Great Lakes Region.

Wings of America, created in 1988 by the Hopi Indians of the Southwest, aims to involve top American Indian runners in the United States National Cross-Country Championship—an event that attracts the attention of college recruiters. Two of Smith's runners placed in the top 50 in last year's championship meet.

"To work with young Indian people who see the importance of training, being fit, and having a good lifestyle is fantastic," Smith says. "It inspires me to continue teaching and coaching.

Monty Draper

Art Liman

Sharing Danish

West Virginia teacher Marc Harshman knows a good tale when he hears one, reads one, or tells one. That's why the veteran writer and storyteller made the decision to go all out in pursuit of a few good Scandinavian folk tales.

"Scandinavian folk tales are more than just trolls and giants wandering around in the bleak Icelandic landscape," says Harshman, who discovered the tales during a trip to Denmark. Last year, he used a fellowship to immerse himself in the Kerwin collection of folklore and mythology at the University of Minnesota.

"I found stories that haven't been told in 100 years, stories about love and magic, tales that are strikingly similar to those my wife—a children's librarian—and I have been telling for 20 years," he says. "There's a unique flavor to the tales that you just have to experience for yourself."

To get you started as a storyteller, Harshman is working to publish three of the folk tales. His seventh children's book, *The Storm*, was published earlier this year.

Meeting on the Quads

Rachelle Omenson

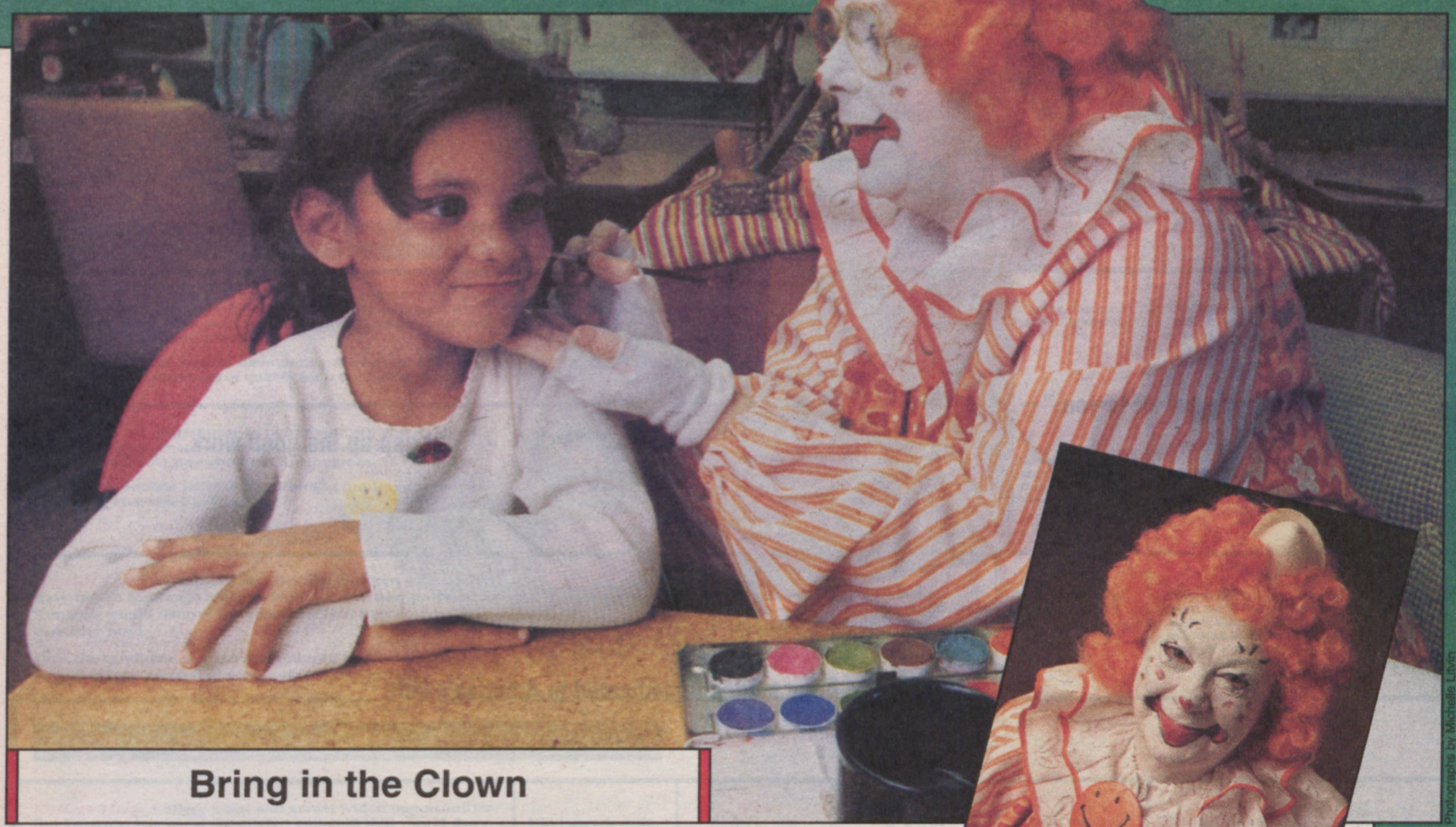
Call the roll: Lucas, Dylan, Noah, and Briana. All four present and accounted for—all four born at the same time to two Racine, Wisconsin elementary teachers, who once thought teaching was exhausting.

"I feel like I'm racing a clock all the time," says **Carol Sauder**, a special ed teacher. "It's constant movement, constant supply and demand"—and constant sleeplessness.

"A typical day is either feeding a baby, changing a baby, or entertaining a baby," says husband **Scott Sauder**, who teaches second grade. "It's a constant care thing."

The Sauders boast a broad support network of friends, including fellow teachers, who help out with the feedings and contribute toward the cost of food and a diaper service.

Turns out, Carol says, that teaching is good preparation for handling quadruplets: "Both jobs require us to be patient and organized."



Photographs by Michelle Litvin

Bring in the Clown

Upon her retirement in 1993, **Bea Koza** went from central office school secretary to class clown. And—don't laugh—she's taking her clowning around pretty seriously these days.

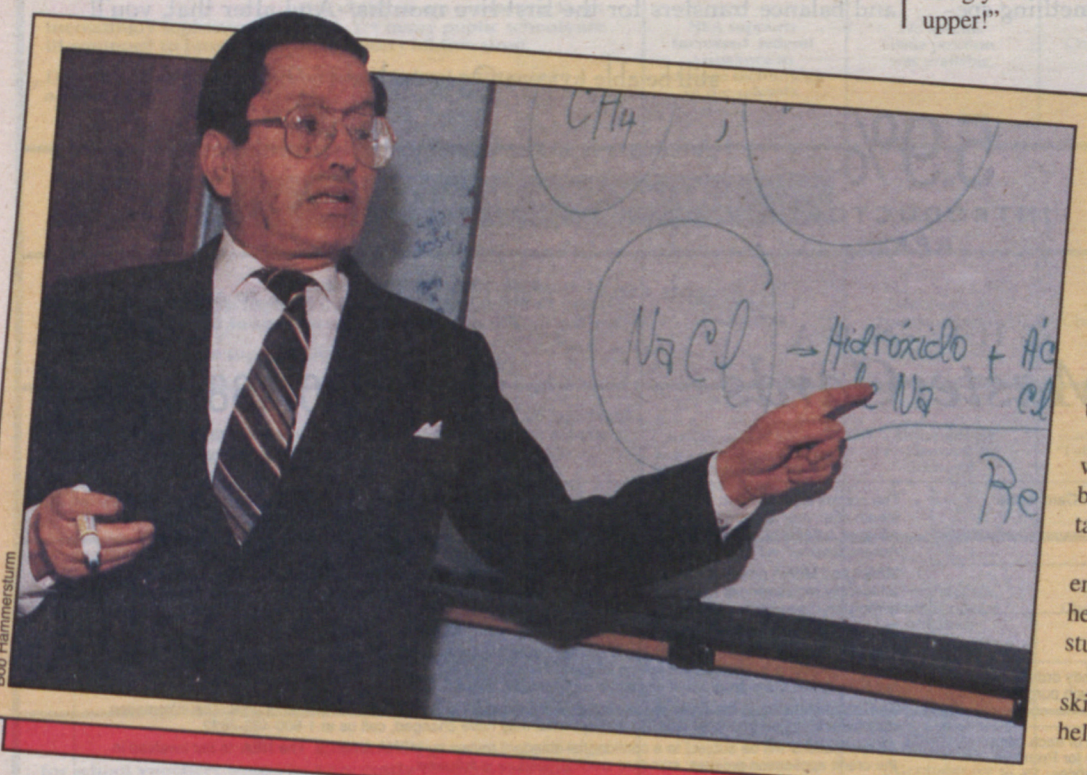
"About five years before I retired, I took a course in clowning at a community college," says Koza, a member of NEA-Retired in Oak Park, Illinois. "In class, I met another woman, also a retiree, and we've been working as a clown team ever since. Most clowns work in pairs."

The pair participates in community parades, at senior centers, at picnics, and at children's parties, where they create balloon sculptures, paint faces, and perform skits.

As members of a local clown club, they have a chance to meet other clowns and learn new routines.

Koza does her own make-up and makes her own costumes—with the help of a dressmaker friend. The material comes from remnants left over from clothes she made for her children years ago.

"Being a clown is more fun for the clown than for the audience," Koza admits. "And it's especially rewarding to work with kids. They love everything you do—even if you do a bad job of painting their faces. What an upper!"



Bob Hammersturm

Living Life to the Fullest

"I dedicated the first 30 years of my life to studying hard," says Massachusetts teacher **Victor Gomez-Araoz**. "Working hard is the only answer."

Gomez-Araoz grew up in the Peruvian jungle near the Amazon River, where he says he learned about animal habits, the medical properties of plants, and how to "swim like a fish."

In the years since, Gomez-Araoz has studied all over the world, earning a doctorate in education and a law degree, becoming a master violinist, and having seven children. He's taught at half a dozen universities and practiced law in Peru.

In 1987, Gomez-Araoz settled down to teach math and science in the bilingual program at Fitchburg High School, where he imparts his love of learning and strong work ethic to his students.

"Students need to read, investigate, and analyze to get the skills to make contributions to society," he says. "They can't help other people if they don't have the skills."

"You've got the most important job in the world."

"I admire what you do."

"So you're a teacher. That's great."

"I take my hat off to you."

"Keep up the good work."

"It's nice to meet someone dedicated to America's kids."

There are certain things other credit cards just can't buy.

Use an ordinary credit card and you'll hear the usual pleasantries. Like "thank you" and "come again." Use an NEA Gold or School Days MasterCard® card and you're likely to hear people say something special about you. That's because the cards identify you as an education professional. They show your dedication to America's kids, and the important role you play in shaping America's future. • The card not only recognizes the work you do. It saves you money, too. There's no annual fee. You get a low 5.9% Annual Percentage Rate (APR) for cash advances and balance transfers for the first five months.† And after that, you'll still be able to save. Our new low 15.9% fixed APR for purchases is lower than most other cards today. • All in all, the NEA MasterCard cards buy what other cards can't. • Call 1-800-468-7632 to apply.

5.9%
INTRODUCTORY APR†

THE NEA
MasterCards

nea Member Benefits

MBNA AMERICA® Member FDIC

1-800-468-7632
Be sure to mention priority code IRYK-F when calling

†Annual Fee	There is no annual fee for the NEA School Days MasterCard or the NEA Premier Gold MasterCard.
Annual Percentage Rate (APR)	15.9% for purchases.
Grace Period for Repayment of Balances for Purchases	At least 25 days from statement closing date.
Method of Computing the Balance for Purchases	Average daily balance (including new purchases).
Transaction Fee for Purchases	Transaction fee for the purchase of wire transfers, money orders, bets, lottery tickets, and casino gaming chips: 2% of each such purchase; $2 minimum, $10 maximum.
Transaction Fee for Cash Advances and Fees for Paying Late or Exceeding the Credit Limit	Transaction fee for bank and ATM cash advances: 2% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Transaction fee for Premium Access Check® or Preferred Access Check® cash advances: 1% of each cash advance; $2 minimum, $10 maximum. Late Payment Fee: $10. Over-the-Credit-Limit Fee: $10.

The current APR for cash advances is 5.9% through your first five statement closing dates commencing the month after your account is opened, and will be 15.9% thereafter (will apply to both new and outstanding cash advance balances). The transaction fee for two specially designated Premium Access Checks® or Preferred Access Checks® will be waived. Cash advances cannot be used to pay off or pay down another MBNA® account.

MBNA and MBNA America® are federally registered service marks of MBNA America Bank, N.A. MasterCard® is a federally registered service mark of MasterCard International, Inc., used pursuant to license. Visa® is a federally registered service mark of Visa U.S.A., Inc., used pursuant to license.

The NEA Credit Card program is issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A.

The NEA Credit Card program has been developed for NEA members only. If a member decides not to renew his/her membership, that person will no longer be eligible to receive the preferred rates and fees offered through the NEA Credit Card program. If eligible, a replacement card will be offered.

The information about the costs of the card described in this application is accurate as of 2/96. The information may have changed after that date. To find out what may have changed, call us at 1-800-468-7632.

All applications will be subject to a confidential standard review by MBNA America. The NEA is not involved in the credit application process; standard credit procedure is followed.

The program is issued and administered by MBNA America Bank, N.A. The program is currently not available in Massachusetts, California, the District of Columbia, Michigan or Pennsylvania.

Any account opened in response to this offer will be governed by the laws of Delaware.

©1996 MBNA America Bank, N.A. 4/96

ELECTION '96

THE '96 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

How do they *measure up* on children and education?

NEA members are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. But, whatever our party affiliation, we're united by a commitment to protecting children and improving public education. This commitment drives the NEA candidate recommendation process. Throughout 1996, NEA will be measuring candidates by their stands on the issues that impact children and schools.

NEA has collected the information below from sources ranging from voting records and candidate statements to the 1996 Presidential Primary National Political Awareness Test (NPAT) conducted by Project Vote Smart. This comparison covers the viable Presidential candidates after the initial round of primaries. For the latest candidate information, check NEA on the World Wide Web at (http://www.nea.org).

AP Wide World Photos

Lamar Alexander

Pat Buchanan

Bill Clinton

Bob Dole

Steve Forbes

Protecting Children's Health and Safety

School Lunches. Federal school meal programs have significantly improved children's health and ability to learn. But Congress has voted to drop federal standards and the federal framework that protect kids. Does the candidate support maintaining the current federal framework and standards of quality for school meal programs?	NEA supports the school meal programs.	**No** (*New York Times*, 4/16/95)	No specific issue position was available.	**Yes** (Clinton Balanced Budget Highlights, 1/6/96)	**No** (Voted for Welfare Reform Act, which included provisions to block grant the school lunch program, 12/22/95)	No specific issue position was available.
Safe Schools. In response to public concern about school safety, Congress enacted the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program. But cuts now threaten the program. Does the candidate support maintaining funding for the Safe And Drug-Free Schools Program?	NEA supports maintaining funding for the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program.	No specific issue position was available.	No specific issue position was available.	**Yes** (Clinton Administration 7-Year Balanced Budget Plan, which called for increased funding, 12/8/95)	**No** (Voted against an amendment to the Continuing Resolution that would have restored this program's funding, 1/26/96)	No specific issue position was available.
Health Care. Millions of families and children who don't have health insurance rely on Medicaid. But new proposals in Congress would remove the guarantee that they could get the care they need. Does the candidate support maintaining Medicaid as a guaranteed federal protection for families and children?	NEA supports maintaining Medicaid as a guaranteed protection for families and children.	**No** (Alexander for President issue statement, undated)	No specific issue position was available.	**Yes** (White House Fact Sheet, 1/18/96)	**No** (Voted to table amendment to the FY96 Budget Reconciliation bill to protect Medicaid access for pregnant women and children, 10/27/95)	**No** (*Time* magazine, 1/29/96)

Preparing Students for Jobs of the Future

College Help. College loans and grants widen opportunities. But Congress has voted significant cutbacks that would deny college loans and grants to thousands of students. Does the candidate support maintaining the federal investment in college loans and grants?	NEA supports maintaining the federal investment in college loans and grants.	**Yes** (Letter to NEA President Keith Geiger, 6/9/95)	No specific issue position was available.	**Yes** (State of the Union Address, 1/24/96)	**No** (Voted to table amendment to the FY96 Budget Reconciliation bill that would have restored student loan funds, 10/26/95)	No specific issue position was available.
Basic Skills. Everyone agrees that basic skills are central to student learning. But the House of Representatives has voted cuts in Title 1 that would cut off basic skills help to 1 million children. Does the candidate support increased federal funding for Title I basic skills assistance?	NEA supports increased funding for basic skills help through Title 1.	No specific issue position was available.	**No** (Speech to the Christian Coalition, 9/9/95)	**Yes** (FY96 Clinton Administration budget proposal)	**No** (Voted against amendment to the Continuing Resolution that would have restored Title I funds, 1/26/96)	No specific issue position was available.
Technology in Schools. Our children are competing in an increasingly sophisticated world. Yet many public schools are ill-equipped to provide the instruction children need. Does the candidate support increased federal assistance to advance technology in schools?	NEA supports increased federal assistance to advance technology in the schools.	No specific issue position was available.	**No** (Speech to the Christian Coalition, 9/9/95)	**Yes** (State of the Union Address, 1/24/96)	**No** (Voted against tabling an amendment that would have eliminated pro-education provisions from the Telecommunications Act, 6/8/95)	No specific issue position was available.

Strengthening Public Education in America

School Improvement. The federal Goals 2000 program is designed to establish higher educational standards and greater accountability, and to spark a national effort at school reform. Does the candidate support Goals 2000?	NEA supports Goals 2000.	**No** (Alexander for President release, undated)	**No** (Speech to the Christian Coalition, 9/9/95)	**Yes** (Clinton budget statement, 12/8/95)	**No** (Voted against H.R. 1804, conference report on the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, 3/25/94)	No specific issue position was available.
Department of Education. The existence of a cabinet-level Department of Education keeps the political spotlight on the learning needs of children. Does the candidate support keeping a cabinet-level, distinct Department of Education?	NEA supports keeping a distinct,cabinet-level Department of Education.	**No** (Alexander for President release, undated)	**No** (Campaign literature: "Pat Buchanan on the Issues")	**Yes** (FY96 Clinton Administration budget proposal)	**No** (1996 Presidential Primary National Political Awareness Test, NPAT)	No specific issue position was available.
Support for Education. Federal aid to education offers children access to help in areas ranging from basic skills to college grants. But Congress has voted deep cuts in federal education funding. Is the candidate committed to increasing federal funding for public education programs over their current levels?	NEA supports increasing federal funding for education programs.	**No** (Alexander for President release, undated)	**No** (Speech to the Christian Coalition, 9/9/95)	**Yes** (Clinton budget statement, 12/8/95)	**No** (Voted against an amendment to the FY96 Congressional Budget Resolution that would have restored education funding, 5/25/95)	**No** (Presidential announcement, 9/22/95)
Public Funds for Public Schools. The use of tax dollars for school vouchers would be very costly to taxpayers and would undermine our public school system. Does the candidate oppose vouchers or other mechanisms for channeling public funds to private or religious schools?	NEA opposes vouchers.	**No** (Alexander for President release, 9/5/95)	**No** (Arizona *Republic*, 10/1/91)	**Yes** (Statement in opposition to California voucher initiative, 10/4/93)	**No** (NPAT)	**No** (Presidential announcement, 9/22/95)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lending a Hand

To help educators in other countries fight for better conditions for teaching and learning, NEA has an established the Education International Solidarity Fund. NEA members who wish to contribute can send checks made out to NEA-EI Solidarity Fund to the NEA Office of International Relations, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

To facilitate contributions, NEA has a form that can be attached to travel vouchers designating part of the reimbursement to the Solidarity Fund.

Overseas Travel

If you're looking to fill your summer with international travel, professional development, and the opportunity to talk to educators from all over the country and the world, here are two opportunities that might interest you:

➤ *Hands Across the Water* sends American teacher delegations to Australia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, or Sweden for two to three weeks each summer. While there, teachers live with host teachers and their families, visit schools, and even teach. Later in the school year, hosts come here to live and work with their American partners.

For more information, contact Erik Mollenhauer, Hands Across the Water, EIRC, 606 Delsea Dr., Sewell, NJ 08080, 609/582-7000, FAX 609/582-4206.

➤ *Global Dialogues* is a study tour for American teachers. This summer's trip to Denmark, Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands is set for July 10-27. A key topic of discussion: the relationship between education, government, and teacher unions. In addition, the trip will include school visits, professional development workshops, and guest lectures.

For more information, contact Sylvia Seidel, NEA National Center for Innovation, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036, 202/822-7906.

FYI on FMS

You've probably never heard of fibromyalgia syndrome. The disease, which affects five million Americans—mostly women and girls, is a chronic, widespread musculoskeletal pain and fatigue disorder. Its cause is unknown.

NEA's Health Information Network has been collecting information on the illness and can point interested NEA members to half a dozen organizations that provide information and assistance.

To get help finding help, contact Roberta Hantgan, NEA Health Information Network, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Good Food, Good Health

Get on board! That's what Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman is asking principals of 94,000 National School Lunch Program schools to do.

Glickman wants them to join Team Nutrition, an effort to make the nation's school lunch program healthier and to promote good nutrition at home.

In addition to the education component, Team Nutrition will offer school food service workers tools and techniques to help them prepare nutritious, appealing meals.

You can get more information by calling 703/305-1624 or by accessing the World Wide Web at (http://www.usda.gov/fcs/team.htm).

Carr Dies at 95

Dr. William G. Carr, former NEA executive secretary and a leading figure in American education, died March 2, 1996 in Denver, where he had been living since 1994. He was 95 years old.

Carr was NEA's top executive from 1952 to 1967. He joined NEA years earlier as assistant research director after receiving his doctorate from Stanford University.

During Carr's administration, NEA membership ranks more than doubled to more than 1 million. Carr was also a prominent figure on the international stage. He was a U.S. delegate to the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco in 1945, then the deputy secretary for the founding conference of UNESCO.

"Dr. Carr was an intelligent, articulate voice for the education profession and peace in the world," notes NEA Executive Director Don Cameron. "His long life was spent dedicated to both."

Eye on the Southeast

For the next five years, the Bell South Foundation will award grants of $15 million to stimulate education improvements in K-12 schools throughout the Southeast.

The Foundation will make two rounds of grants each year, in the spring and fall, beginning this April. For information on the grants, see the Foundation's new Internet homepage (http://www.bsf.org/bsf).

Clean the Air

If you suspect the quality of the air inside your school isn't up to snuff, help is on the way.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has produced—with help from NEA and a host of other organizations—the *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* kit. Materials in the kit can be used to help diagnose problems, then design and carry out practical, low-cost remedies.

To order a kit (order #055-000-00503-6), send a check for $22 made out to Superintendent of Documents to Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250. For more information, contact Janet Samorodin at NEA headquarters.

Special opportunity for NEA members

Here's how you can stay one step ahead of the future

Electronic learning can open the door to thousands of new opportunities for your students. But to use education technology to its full potential, you need to know what it can really do for your kids, and how to make it work effectively in the classroom. That's why NEA is proudly cosponsoring the **10th Annual Technology + Learning Conference.** In workshops and sessions designed especially for NEA members, you'll see the very best of what the future of education has to offer — the programs, the equipment, the services, and the ideas.

A special rate for NEA members only

The regular fee for the Technology + Learning Conference is $460, but as an NEA member, you pay just **$200.** ***That's less than half the normal rate.***

Call (202) 822-7752 for more information, or use the coupon below. Or visit NEA's homepage on the World Wide Web: http://www.nea.org for the latest Conference updates.

10TH ANNUAL TECHNOLOGY+LEARNING CONFERENCE
Sponsored by the NSBA's Institute for the Transfer of Technology to Education
October 23-25, 1996
Dallas, Texas
Dallas Convention Center

Yes! I'd like FREE information about the Technology + Learning Conference. Please send me _____ brochures. (One for every member of my team!)

Name _____
Title _____ Organization _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (_____) _____

Mail to: NEA Center for Education Technology, attn: C. Wilkins
1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
Fax to: (202) 822-7987, E-mail to: NEA Ed Tech@aol.com

Earn $4,000 Per Month From Your Home With A Computer!

Pentium™ Computer Included

Begin this summer part-time and still retain the security of your present position. This is a proven business an individual or couple can run. If you purchase our software and business program, you will receive the computer and printer at no extra cost. If you already own a computer, you may receive a discount. You do not need to own, or know how to run, a computer—we will provide free, home office training. Financing available.

Learn how other teachers are building lifetime incomes!

To receive free explanation cassettes and color literature, call toll-free:

1-800-343-8014, ext. 314

Or Write:

Computer Business Services, Inc., CBSI Plaza, Ste. 314, Sheridan, IN 46069

Money

On The Market..

... for a mortgage? Do your homework—and you may be able to buy that dream house, after all.

As we head into the peak home buying season, a refresher on different types of mortgages seems in order, particularly for those who have not been in the mortgage market lately.

If you bought your last home when adjustable rate mortgages offered a great deal, you may be surprised to learn that the difference in the rates between adjustable and fixed mortgages today isn't very big. But the variety of new mortgage products available means that you may be able to buy a more expensive home without increasing your monthly payments.

Here's some background. Adjustable rate mortgages came into vogue in the early 1980s when double-digit rates for fixed mortgages made home buying unaffordable for many Americans. Back then, an adjustable rate mortgage—or ARM—often made the difference between qualifying for a mortgage and remaining a renter.

But over the past several years, as rates for 30-year fixed mortgages have held in the single digits, fewer Americans have applied for ARMs.

Homebuyers must see a spread—or difference—of at least 2 1/2 percentage points before they will choose an ARM over a fixed rate, according to Keith Gumbinger, a spokesman at HSH Associates, a New Jersey firm that does research on the mortgage market.

Consider what happened in 1994. Interest rates went up throughout the year, nudged along by the Federal Reserve Board's continual tightening of short-term rates. By December of that year, rates on a fixed 30-year mortgage averaged 9.41 percent across the country. The average one-year ARM offered a rate of 6.83 percent for the first year.

Of course, the rate on an ARM can increase as much as 2 percentage points a year depending on what happens to interest rates in general. So most buyers assume the worst case scenario—that they will pay two points more on the one-year anniversary date. With a difference of just over 2 1/2 percentage points, 60 percent of home buyers selected an ARM rather than a fixed rate, Gumbinger says.

But by mid-October 1995, when fixed rates hit a 21-year low of 7.73 percent and one-year ARMs were offered at 5.84 percent, "it was hard to justify an ARM," Gumbinger says.

The difference in these two rates—just 1.89 points—was not enough to persuade consumers to take on the risk of an increasing rate. So in October, a mere 20 percent of homebuyers were choosing ARMs, Gumbinger adds.

Although an ARM doesn't really become attractive until there is a spread of about 3 percentage points between the two rates, you should watch these spreads. There have been times over the past couple of years when the introductory rates on ARMs have been as low as 3 percent.

Meanwhile, you may be able to get another product that's better tailored to your needs. Here are some of the newer products on the market.

➤ A *balloon mortgage* offers a set rate that's lower than a fixed rate and higher than an adjustable rate for a specified term, usually five or seven years. At that point, you must get a new mortgage at whatever terms are available. This loan is good for families who know they will spend less than five to seven years in the home.

➤ *Hybrid ARMs* are a brand-new variation on the balloon mortgage. These loans offer a fixed rate for the initial period, which might be three, five, seven, or 10 years. After the initial period, the loan converts to a one-year adjustable mortgage. This type of mortgage, which replaced a loan called the "two-step," can work well for homebuyers who don't plan to stay in their new home for more than the initial period of the loan. It might also work for young families who expect their earning power to increase. Plus, "during that first low-rate period, you can put away some money for a college education," Gumbinger says.

➤ The *15-year fixed-rate loan,* which carries a lower interest rate than the 30-year, has become popular with trade-up buyers, Gumbinger says. The low average rate of just under 7 percent means that many buyers can keep monthly payments in the same range as for their old home and pay the loan off in half the time.

If you feel you need help sorting through these types of mortgages and finding the best rate, consider using a mortgage broker—a professional who helps you find the best financing tool and interest rate for your budget, usually at no cost to you.

Not only do mortgage brokers save you time, but sometimes they can even help you qualify. If you operate your own business, for example, and will have trouble proving the income you expect to earn, a broker can lead you to lenders with alternative financing.

Good brokers are your advocate—they deal with lots of different institutions and know all the products intimately. In most parts of the country, this is a very competitive business and the people who do it know the market well.

But there are some lemons. For example, Jill Holland, a mortgage broker in New York, says she's heard stories of brokers in some parts of the country tacking on fees for their services.

So make certain that you check references before you use a broker. Make sure, too, that you will be paying nothing additional for this service. Holland is paid by the lender. That's what you want.

The other option is to do the legwork on your own with the help of a good kit from HSH Associates. The Homebuyers Mortgage Kit, a 44-page booklet that costs $20, discusses the types of mortgages that are available and tells you how to qualify and how to compare rates. To order, call 800/UPDATES.

—Mary Rowland

What Can You Afford?

Here's what you can expect to pay monthly for a $100,000 loan:

Type	Rate	Monthly Payment	Total Interest
30-year fixed	7.49%	$689.53	$151,470.84
15-year fixed	6.97%	$897.15	$61,487.34
1-year adjustable	5.39%	$560.91	depends on later rates
5-year fixed/1yr. adj.	6.74%	$647.93	$32,741.30*
7-year fixed/1yr. adj.	6.94%	$661.28	$46,609.38**

*First five years only; after that rate is adjusted each year
**First seven years only; later rates adjustable

If you're like most people, there's always something changing in your life – planning this , buying that , having one of these , paying for one of those , looking forward to this .

If something's changing in your life, you probably should find out how it changes your life insurance needs. We'd like to help you keep your family protected. For the answers you need, call **1-800-637-4636.**

Mon-Fri, 8 am – 8 pm; or Sat, 9 am – 1 pm (ET)

NEA Member Services Representatives can answer any questions you have regarding NEA Insurance Programs and the protection they offer your family. When you call, be sure to ask for a free rate quote on economical NEA group term life insurance, the affordable way to upgrade your current coverage. Call 1-800-637-4636. No obligation, no pressure, no problem. Because something's always changing.

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

nea Member Benefits

Underwritten by The Prudential
The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, New Jersey 07102-3777

Contract Form 83500 COV1004
TTL046

The Prudential Insurance Company of America. Licensed in all states. Principal offices in Newark, New Jersey 07102-3777.
(This insurance has certain limitations and exclusions. For costs and complete details of the coverage, contact NEA Member Benefits Representatives toll free at 1-800-637-4636.)

ByteSize

NEA members using technology to improve education

IN THE CLASSROOM

Science Scales New Heights

WHO: Leo Rice, chemistry teacher and science coordinator, grades 6-12, Clawson High School, Clawson, Michigan

E-MAIL ADDRESS: mary.gholz.net

WHAT: High school kids in suburban Detroit create multimedia science lessons that are good enough to be part of the school district's official science curriculum.

INSPIRATION: "I'm very comfortable with chemistry after teaching it for 33 years. But when it comes to computers, the kids know more than I do. So it works out. I make sure everything's done right—the science part—and the kids, with help from business technology teacher Joyce Bates and area businesses, turn out curriculum units for elementary, middle, and high school students.

"We've done units on photosynthesis, the Periodic table, and hydrospheres. A handful of my students go into the elementary grades and teach a unit.

"Prentice-Hall, which markets the Authorware Academic Software the students use to create the science projects, has arranged for Clawson students to go on America Online, where they 'chat' with students nationwide. This fall, the kids pitched their curriculum units to area math and science teachers."

CLICK: "I call this pure education. The kids can let their imaginations run, yet learn science, the computer, and cooperative learning, all at the same time."

Robert Chase

Science coordinator Leo Rice teams with high school students to fine-tune another curriculum unit utilizing multimedia.

BYTES FOR BEGINNERS

If your school is struggling with the question of where to find technology dollars, you should consider an often overlooked source: local businesses.

More and more, businesses are realizing that their contributions to schools today can help build a qualified workforce for tomorrow.

Consider the efforts of one community located in Silicon Valley, California. Through a joint community-business-education venture, this town developed a program called Challenge 2000, a $20 million effort supported by several Silicon Valley businesses.

Leaders at Silicon Graphics, a partner in the program, say the company's success, and the success of other high-tech companies, will depend on the existence of a world-class K-12 educational system.

Your school may not become part of a multi-million dollar program like Challenge 2000, but there are steps you and your colleagues can take to help win local business support.

Start by forming a committee of teachers, administrators, parents, and other community residents. Contact your state's Department of Education. Identify potential local businesses and explore ways that your school can begin conversations with them.

Education-business partnerships have great potential for enhancing education, but they require hard work. For more information about—and examples of—education-business partnerships, start your search via the Web at (http://twelve.srv.lycos.com). Use "education partnerships."

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

SCIENCE FRIDAY

■ NEA is a co-sponsor of Science Friday Kids Connection, a collaboration between National Public Radio and KIDSNET, the Washington-based clearinghouse for children's programming. This project links seven schools across the nation with seven local NPR stations. The students listen to the radio show "Science Friday" and participate in related curriculum activities online.

This spring, a special broadcast will have on-the-air discussions about student research projects based on the radio show discussions and online questions and activities.

To participate, listen to "Talk of the Nation" on Fridays for lively, informational science discussions. Online activities are posted at (www.npr.org/sfkids/). The KIDSNET homepage can be reached at (www.erinet.com/kidsnet/).

UPCOMING

■ Technology and Learning Conference, October 23-25, 1996, in Dallas. Sponsored by the National School Boards Association. NEA members receive a special discount. See the ad on page 24 of this issue for details.

CYBERSPACE CHAMPS

■ For the second year in a row, NEA is sponsoring the National Information Infrastructure (NII) Awards program. Coordinated by Access Media, the awards will once again recognize "Champions of Cyberspace" and highlight the contributions already being made with networked information and telecommunications technology.

NEA is joined by more than 50 public and private sector co-sponsors, including Bell South, IBM, the American Library Association, the American Medical Association, Sun Microsystems, the International Communications Association, and the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

More information on the 1996 NII Awards can be found on the NII Web site (http://www.gii-awards.com), through E-mail (info@gii-awards.com), or by calling 310/450-7941, extension 21.

RESOURCES

Free or Inexpensive

READING

Your Reading: An Annotated Booklist for Middle School and Junior High offers more than 1,200 annotations on subjects ranging from horror to romance. $21.95 ($15.95 for NCTE members) plus $1.50 s&h. For additional information, call the National Council of Teachers of English at 217/328-3870.

ARTS EDUCATION

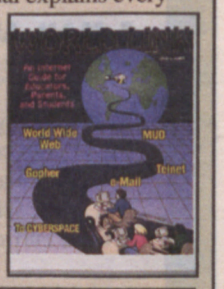
Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools. Produced by the U.S. Department of Education, this study of how arts education is faring in public schools covers what type of art programs are being taught, who teaches them, how much money is allocated, and how much arts programs have improved in the last five years. $5.50, order number 06500000-8114. To order, call 202/512-1800.

CONTESTS FOR KIDS

All the Best Contests for Kids, 5th edition. Joan Bergstrom and Craig Bergstrom. Tricycle Press. Includes more than 175 national and local contests for kids ages 6 to 12—from science and poetry to pig calling and making the world a better place. $9.95 paperback plus $3.50 s&h. To order, call 800/841-BOOK.

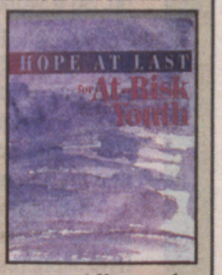
THE INTERNET

World Link. Linda Joseph. This user-friendly Internet manual explains everything you need to know about modems, online services, and Internet resources. $24.95 plus $3.75 s&h. To order, call Greyden Press, 800/881-9421.



ON THE EDGE

Hope at Last for At-Risk Youth. Robert Barr and William Parrett. This book provides teachers with practical information on educating at-risk students and spotlights effective programs for at-risk youth. It also suggests ways parents can better prepare their children for school. $34 plus $6.29 s&h. To order, contact Allyn and Bacon, 800/666-9433.



CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide to Teasing and Bullying for Use with Fourth and Fifth Grade Students. Nan Stein and Lisa Sjostrom. Now you can "bullyproof" your classroom with the ideas in this guide. A joint publication of NEA and Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. 60pp. 1996. NEA member price (1873-7-10-FF) $15.95. To order call 800/229-4200.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Different and The Same: Helping Children Identify and Prevent Prejudice, produced by Family Communications (of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" fame) for kids in grades 1-3. Materials include nine short videos using puppets to highlight themes such as standing up to prejudice and forming friendships across racial lines, plus a teacher's guide and training package. $150 plus $10.50 s&h. To order, call 800/228-4630. To get the kit at minimal cost, contact your local PBS station's education department.

To see if our mortgage program is right for you, fill out this form.

1. I hate filling out forms.

☐ Yes ☐ No

Introducing the NEA Over-the-Phone Mortgage Application.

With one phone call, you can apply for a mortgage with competitive rates and important money-saving features. This offer is available to NEA members, exclusively through the NEA Home Financing Program,SM provided by Prudential Home Mortgage.

So say good-bye to long, confusing mortgage applications. Even if you're just thinking about buying a home or refinancing, one quick call to our experienced mortgage counselors will give you instant rate quotes, on-the-spot pre-qualification, and helpful advice.

For more information on the NEA over-the-phone mortgage application, our $150 NEA member refund, or any of our other exclusive money-saving features, just call the NEA Mortgage QuickLine Mon-Fri, 8 am to midnight (ET) at:

1-800-NEA-4-YOU, Ext. 306
(1-800-632-4968)

NEA Home Financing ProgramSM *Helping to make dreams affordable.*

NEA Member Benefits

Prudential Home Mortgage

NEA Home Financing Program is a service mark of the National Education Association. The NEA is not offering or originating any loans in connection with this program, and does not approve or deny loans. This program is administered by Prudential Home Mortgage, which processes, originates, and services loans. The Prudential Home Mortgage Company, Inc. 8000 Maryland Avenue, Clayton, Missouri, is in the business of originating, processing, purchasing and selling residential mortgage loans secured by liens on real property. The Prudential Home Mortgage Company, Inc. is an affiliate of The Prudential Insurance Company of America, doing business as P.H. Mortgage Company, Inc. in Ohio. New York office: Expressway Executive Center, Inc. Suite 100, 48 South Service Road, Melville, NY 11747; Arizona BK 8408; Florida Licensed Mortgage Lender; Illinois Residential Mortgage Licensee; Licensed Mortgage Banker/New Jersey Department of Banking; Calif. Broker/Lender. All California loans will be made pursuant to a California Department of Corporations Consumer Finance Lender License or Commercial Finance Lender License. Equal Housing Opportunity Lender.

THF046

Your NEA

NEA Q&A

School Stories

Will the NEA TV series, *Teacher TV*, be back for a sixth season?
Yes—in a way. NEA and its cable partner, Discovery, are working on a new series called *School Stories*, which will do what *Teacher TV* did best—and then some. Like *Teacher TV*, *School Stories* will showcase real teachers with real solutions in real classrooms. But *School Stories* will aim its positive message at the general public, not just at teachers.

What kind of stories will the new show cover?
Stories that honor the profession of teaching and learning. So look for shows on what makes veteran teachers thrive, how a rural high school struggles to keep up with technology, how school employees work to keep schools safe—and more. Next fall's programs are in production now.

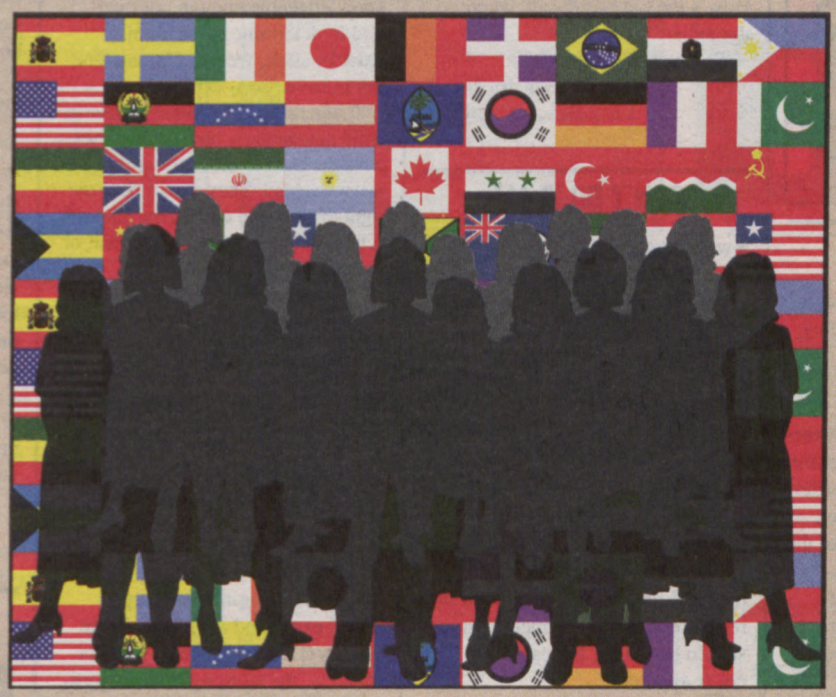
When will *School Stories* air?
Tune in to The Learning Channel, Sundays at 12:30 p.m. ET, starting October 13. Each month's schedule of shows is published in *NEA Today* (see page 12) and is available online. If you don't have access to TLC, call your cable carrier and ask for it. Better yet, organize your community to pressure your cable carrier. For a free kit of organizing tips, write to School Stories, NEA National Center for Innovation, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

How can viewers get more information on past and future stories?
Summaries of each show—complete with follow-up addresses and phone numbers—are available on NEA Online and by writing to NEA. *Teacher TV* will continue in reruns, and copies of *Teacher TV* and *School Stories* can be purchased from NEA's Professional Library. Call 800/229-4200.

Those who buy copies of next year's shows will get an added bonus. At the end of each tape, they'll find 15 to 20 minutes of practical tips from teacher experts who've been successful in implementing change.

SPEAKING OUT ON THE ISSUES

Women's Rights: The Next Step



Delegates to last summer's international women's conference in Beijing called for an end to the widespread discriminatory practices against women and girls still evident worldwide.

As a step toward that formidable goal, NEA and the Sara Lee Corporation have sponsored a 15-minute video of conference highlights. NEA Secretary-Treasurer Marilyn Monahan was an official U.S. delegate to the Beijing conference. NEA President Keith Geiger introduces the video.

"I was thrilled to witness the events in Beijing last year," Monahan says. "I participated in talks about educating women about their rights, training officials in human rights, and bringing to justice perpetrators of violence against women.

"Now," she adds, "I'm proud to help bring that powerful message to millions of Americans—and thousands of American classrooms."

In addition to the video, NEA worked with the Center for Policy Alternatives to prepare a 50-page booklet designed to help activists focus on solutions.

The report suggests things you can do—ranging from reporting all cases of violence against women and girls to supporting employers with family-friendly policies. Also included, a brief summary of what the Clinton Administration is doing to ensure equality for women, plus a resource list of agencies and organizations working to improve the lives of women.

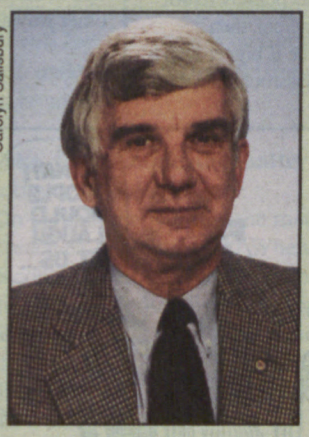
For more information, write to the Center for Policy Alternatives, 1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 710, Washington, DC 20009-5728.

WORKING FOR YOU

Crusading Against Vouchers

Bill Comer, who works in NEA's Western Regional government relations office, has fought long and hard against public school vouchers.

"Vouchers aren't about improving education," he says. "They're about economics, funding private schools that might not succeed without state support, and reducing the kinds of services available in public schools."



Carolyn Salisbury

Comer has helped out in Association efforts to defeat vouchers in Colorado in 1992 and in California in 1993. He's also advised NEA affiliates in Washington, Oregon, and Nevada. And he regularly speaks out—at meetings, conventions, and forums—on the people, money, and the real agenda behind voucher proposals.

"Vouchers are an attempt to destroy public education and run schools for profit," Comer says.

When he's not speaking out, Comer's writing. Most recently, he helped write the chapter on vouchers in the 1995 manual for NEA's Center for the Preservation of Public Education.

"The American people still have great confidence in public schools," he says. "Sure, they want some changes, but they don't want to see public education destroyed."

To prove his point, Comer often notes that between 1967 and 1993, Americans voted against vouchers and similar schemes in 20 statewide referendums by a cumulative vote margin of more than two-to-one.

For more information about how to fight vouchers in your community, contact:

- NEA's Center for the Preservation of Public Education, Room 514, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
- People for the American Way, which will soon publish a study on how voucher-backing foundations get their funding. Its address: 2000 M St., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036.
- Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, 1816 Jefferson Pl., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Letters

BENCH THE DADS

In reading the answers to the question "Should schools bench pregnant cheerleaders?" (Debate, March), I noticed a significant omission.

Jacqueline Brown—who answers "yes"—says girls who get pregnant are unfit to hold positions of leadership and responsibility at school. But she never makes mention of the child's father.

If he's captain of the debate team or president of the senior class, should he also be stripped of his office? Will he lose the "status and glory that goes with the position"?

It seems that once again girls are being held to a standard of moral character from which boys are exempt. It may take two to tango, but it seems only one has to face the music.

Lara Adcock
Annandale, Virginia

Yes, by all means bench pregnant teenagers. Jacqueline Brown makes some fine points when she states that "cheerleaders are, by definition, leaders . . ." and that "to demonstrate leadership qualities [requires] accountability, honor, and responsibility."

But Brown doesn't go far enough. I say, if at all possible, identify the father of that child. Then bench him, too!

Simmy Fisher
Middletown, Ohio

If we bench the pregnant cheerleader, shouldn't we also bench the captain of the basketball or football team for the same reason? Unless and until male athletes are taken off a team for becoming fathers, we're using a double standard in even considering removing female cheerleaders from the squad for indulging in the behavior that we don't "allow students in leadership positions to model."

Ellen Sholk
Barre, Vermont

We've become too casual about teen pregnancies.

A pregnant teenager shouldn't be shunned—but she shouldn't be allowed to be a cheerleader either. She belongs in child care classes, along with the phantom father. They now have someone to look after for the rest of their lives.

Only in five to 10 years will that girl admit that cheerleading while pregnant wasn't a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." Can you imagine the reunion? "Hey, aren't you the cheerleader who got pregnant? How's the kid? And, say, where's the father?"

So much for self-esteem.

Edward Hauck
Long Beach, California

CAN'T DO IT ALL

I was outraged when I read about the people pushing for a Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act (Legal, March). As a parent, I wouldn't have a separate dinner menu for each member of my family. So I can only imagine having to create a customized menu for 28 children.

As a teacher, I readily accept that each child has a set of individual needs based on their abilities or disabilities. But this doesn't include the need for the parent's ethical or religious values to be met. That should be left for the parents to cover at home.

I'd like to know how many of the Act's supporters have ever been in charge of a classroom with 28 children all coming from different backgrounds.

Nicole Le Floc'h
Pembroke Pines, Florida

PRINCIPAL PURPOSE

What should teachers do when principals hand them a letter from a parent who objects to dozens of standard classroom practices (Legal, February)? Your column suggest teachers write a nice note in response.

I suggest a different, more realistic, and less wimpy approach—in effect, "Principal, do your job."

I suggest teachers politely return the letter to the principal, then explain that the issue is bigger than a single teacher or classroom and that it requires a general administrative policy and response.

All school employees should know that policy, but none should be put in the position of telling parents that their demand is unreasonable or illegal.

Despite the legitimate need for parents to be involved with schools, many, if not most, are neither knowledgeable enough nor qualified to determine curriculum. Attacks aside, we must remain confident in our own expertise.

If parents aren't content to have a child in a public school setting, they have the right to move the child to a private school. They do not have the right to twist and contort the public school to their particular, peculiar, or fanatical viewpoint.

The purpose of an education is to make students safe for ideas, not to make ideas safe for students.

Donald Lown
Elmira, Oregon

BEYOND GRADES

I'm a multiage teacher of 6- to 8-year-olds and must respond to the outdated and uninformed arguments expressed against multiage classes (Debate, February). Unfortunately, the wording of your question—"Should Age Determine Grade Level?"—only invites the exaggerated focus on ages of children at a given grade level.

Multiage education is not about grade level. It's not about low standards for achievement or behavior. And it's only very rarely about retention or acceleration in the traditional sense.

Multiage education is about meeting the needs of every child, wherever that child is on the developmental continuum. Within the wider range of achievement in multiage classrooms, children have the opportunity to grow and learn in many ways, and at a pace that allows them to be successful.

Simply put, multiage education is about fitting the educational system to the child, rather than the other way around.

Wendy Harden
Redway, California

HARD TO SWALLOW

I was appalled by "No More Choking," your February book review. The fact that Bennett's book was a bestseller for so long, that his *Children's Book of Virtues* is currently a bestseller, should tell all Americans—liberal or conservative—what they're longing to hear. Let's celebrate these remarkable books and be glad that people want to read about good things and raise their families on good principles.

Rachel Schaad
Bellevue, Washington

It's no surprise to me that the writings in William Bennett's *Virtues* made you gag. The fact is that real virtues are sometimes hard to swallow. If Greer's book means "no more choking," perhaps it contains no substance.

I've not read or obtained a copy of *A Call to Character*, nor do I intend to. I'll stay with my well-worn copy of the original.

Robert Shumway
Wyalusing, Pennsylvania

BARBIE CLOTHES

An A+ for your "zero" evaluation of Mattel's Teacher Barbie (Heroes & Zeroes, February). Not only should the toy company give Teacher Barbie a "computer, a science lab, and a decent pair of slacks" as you suggest, but underwear would be welcome as well.

If a half-clothed Teacher Barbie is Mattel's idea of being "dressed for success," I have to wonder what kind of success they have in mind.

Michele Pfrogner
New Carlisle, Ohio

DIFFERENT ROUTE

Reading bus driver Tami Buzbee's column (Soundoff, February) made we wonder if she's cut out for the job. Her descriptions of the students she deals with every day are filled with sarcasm and insulting descriptions.

For the record, I have driven a mile in her shoes. After teaching at an elementary school each day, I head off for the local high school to drive their bus. The kids with whom I drive are typical high schoolers. They occasionally get a bit rowdy but are most often polite, appreciative of the ride, and fun to talk with.

They treat me with respect and courtesy, mainly, I think, because I offer the same to them. Tami Buzbee might benefit from doing the same.

James Cassara
Asheville, North Carolina

Tami Buzbee's description of the job of a school bus driver caused me to reflect on what a truly difficult job it is.

Although she described her work with much good humor, I tried to imagine myself with "65 kids who don't like one another" sitting (for the most part) behind me while I maneuvered a bus—often in difficult weather conditions.

I wish to salute our bus drivers! They safely transport our kids every single day—that's no easy task.

Do they care about kids? I've had school bus drivers attend meetings about students—on their own time. One of our bus drivers recently offered to take a student, who frequently had been a problem on the bus, to a weekly evening sporting activity, on her own time.

To say they care about kids doesn't quite cover it. I plan to let them know just how much they are respected and appreciated.

Susan Nelson
Kane, Pennsylvania

CLEAN SCENE

A recent letter writer attacked the environmental stewardship at Huntington Woods School, the subject of your December cover story ("The Best School in the Nation?").

I'd like to clarify that the lunch scene you picture features students who bring their lunch to school. We certainly cannot control what packaging materials parents choose. However, in our school's hot lunch program, we recycle almost everything we use.

In addition, our students do many other things for environmental improvement, including composting, neighborhood clean-up, tree planting on school grounds, and paper recycling.

Kay Mentley
Principal, Huntington Woods
Wyoming, Michigan

Editor's Note: If you have other questions for the staff at Huntington Woods, please send them to the school at 4334 Byron Center Ave., Wyoming, MI 49509.

Let's Talk!

Letters are edited for length and clarity. Share your ideas, comments, and opinions with *NEA Today* in one of five ways:

- ✔ By mail: Write to Letters, *NEA Today*, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.
- ✔ By FAX: 202/822-7206.
- ✔ By phone: 202/822-7201.
- ✔ By NEA Online: Keyword NEA Today. To subscribe to NEA Online, call 800/781-5577 and ask for America Online's free software and special rate for NEA members.
- ✔ By E-mail. Write to NEAToday@aol.com.

Debate

Should parents be involved in *all* school decisions?

YES

Dick Bennett teaches an integrated humanities curriculum to ninth and tenth graders at Odyssey School, an alternative school in Greece, New York. He's a past president of the Greece Teachers Association and the current NEA Learning Lab facilitator for his district.

In this era of education reform and transformation, it's important that schools garner the support of those most affected by change: the parents of our students. And the best way to garner that support is to involve parents in school decision making.

Teachers have always asked parents to support their children's school work at home. We've always consulted parents about discipline problems and solicited their support in motivating recalcitrant students to learn.

But most school employees have stopped short of asking parents to help define a school's mission, choose curricular materials, or shape a school's budget. Somehow, they reason, that's not a parent's job. I disagree.

Parents can contribute unique viewpoints based on personal experiences and professional expertise. And because they learn so much about the school community through their involvement, parents become better advocates for their child within the school and for their school within the community.

My own school, Odyssey, regularly involves parents in decision making. Four years ago, when we designed the school, several parents helped develop the school's philosophy and structure. Today those same parents, who are involved in many school activities, remain our strongest supporters.

Odyssey involves parents in a variety of ways, perhaps one of the most unique being to help teach classes. We schedule quarterly enrichment courses, which expand on the interests of staff and students—and ask teachers, students, members of the surrounding community, and parents to teach them. So far, parents have taught classes in chess, community service, calligraphy, and construction.

A parent sits on our management/coordinating team, one parent schedules our enrichment class period, parents participate on our student support committee, and parents are regularly consulted about school decisions.

Although we offer opportunities for parents to work on the building management teams, there are many reasons why some parents can't get involved. So Odyssey gathers input from parents in other ways, input that is later used to make school decisions.

We constantly request feedback from parents—at open houses, on conference night, in our newsletter, in surveys, and in regular meetings and focus groups. We also solicit specific recommendations from parents through grade level teams. We use random sampling and phone some parents to invite them to attend focus groups.

Parents are honest and pleased that we seek their opinions. They respond in a caring, supportive way. In fact, last year many parents commented that teachers were working too hard, that they didn't want us to burn out.

Some fear that parents will take over, ignore the expert opinions of school staff, and force decisions that staff members don't support. We have not found that to be true.

Most parents don't want the final say—they just want to be able to offer some input. And we've found that when they're involved in the decision making process, they're more supportive of the final decision.

One example: Last year, we debated whether to go to a block scheduling plan with 90-minute classes. We asked parents—in focus groups, privately, and through the PTSA and booster clubs—what they thought of the idea. We found that they were concerned about a lack of time for music groups within the school day.

Having that feedback allowed us to modify the plan to meet their needs. The parents who raised the concern were pleased, a lot of students benefited from the decision, and most staff felt the input helped us make the best possible choice for everyone.

Parent involvement in decisions builds support for instruction. Such involvement also builds interdependent personal connections and trust between the staff and home, and allows the work of the school—learning—to proceed as a collegial enterprise, with staff and parents sharing the same goal.

Bottom line: The more that parents are involved, the more student achievement improves.

NO

Gloria Uderos-Blackburn teaches language arts and science at Warfield Middle School in Kentucky. She's served on a site-based decision making council at another school. Uderos-Blackburn is president-elect of her NEA local affiliate, the Martin County Education Association.

As a youngster growing up in central California, I remember "room mothers," moms who helped the teacher prepare for class parties and other special occasions. Back then, that was pretty much the limit of parental involvement.

But times have changed. In 1990, the Kentucky Education Reform Act created radical changes in schools in my state. One such change—the creation of school-based decision making councils—too often puts parents where they don't belong.

These councils—made up of three teachers, two parents, and an administrator, the first two groups elected by their peers—involve parents in all decision making policies at a particular school by inviting them to serve on any or all committees that develop those policies.

In my experience as a teacher council member, I've encountered parents who are reluctant to serve on the council and even more reluctant to volunteer their time and effort in implementing the programs mandated by the Kentucky Education Reform Act.

I understand their reluctance. That's because years ago as a young parent, I, too, would have felt unqualified to help make internal decisions concerning my children's education. Now, as an educator, I still feel that parents are unqualified to make some of the decisions that must be made.

Take, for example, the matter of selecting textbooks.

Do parents really know the material that teachers need to cover? When a specific content area is up for adoption, finding the proper textbook to supplement instruction is a long and tedious procedure. Do most parents have the skills to evaluate and select the textbooks a teacher needs?

Instructional practice is another area that concerns me. I've spent years acquiring the skills required by my profession. A nonprofessional shouldn't presume to be qualified to make decisions about classroom instruction. I know that I would never presume to tell a brain surgeon how to operate on a patient.

Then there's the matter of selecting instructional materials. Most teachers are constantly looking for materials to enhance their teaching abilities—in catalogs, at conventions, in professional teacher stores. Teachers know best what supplemental materials they need in their own classrooms.

Teachers—not parents—are also the experts in school curriculum. In my own district, the two middle schools feed into the consolidated high school. I know what my students must learn in order to meet the high school requirements, as does my counterpart in the other middle school. Do parents know?

Assigning students to classes, allocating staff time, determining the best use of building space during a school day, and scheduling the instructional day and week are also areas where parents lack sufficient knowledge to make meaningful decisions. These are areas that are better handled by administrators and competent school staff.

I also feel strongly that parents should have no say in professional development decisions.

These days, a professional development coordinator provides the staff with a selection of professional development activities. The teachers, in turn, make their choices. How could parents possibly contribute to this process?

Of course parents want to be involved in the education of their children. And, as a teacher, I want them involved.

But the activities they can contribute to most take place *after* school. They can help their children with homework, read to them, help to reinforce concepts taught in class, even re-teach the same idea in a different way to help children better understand.

And there are other areas where some parent input is appropriate. These include extracurricular programs and *some* discipline/classroom management decisions involving their child only.

But parents certainly don't have the knowledge to make informed decisions in all areas in school management. Decisions in the areas I've cited are best left to trained and qualified professionals.

5.70% APY

NEA-Sponsored
GoldCertificate® CD*

The NEA

St. Louis

4.90% APY

Mercantile Bank

Seattle

5.10% APY

Seattle First

5.29% APY

Wachovia Bank

New York

4.45% APY

Citibank

Atlanta

Chicago

4.95% APY

First Chicago

12-Month CD Comparison

Beat the best rates from coast to coast with the NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD.

Now, no matter where you live, you can earn top CD rates — rates that beat the nation's best, as ranked by *Money* magazine.** Just open an NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate CD. You'll get exclusive high rates and terms from 6 months to 60 months, all with a minimum opening balance of just $1,000. For your free rate quote call **1-800-348-4632**, ext. 3129.

nea Member Benefits

MBNA AMERICA®

Member FDIC

NEA-Sponsored GoldCertificate® CD

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) for the GoldCertificate CD is valid from 1/29/96 through 2/4/96, based on a $1,000 minimum opening deposit. All other rates are valid as of 1/31/96, based on a $2,500 minimum opening deposit. Source – *Meyers Interest Rate Survey*. Penalty may be imposed for early withdrawal of CD principal.

**NEA GoldCertificate 12-month CD versus comparable term CDs ranked by *Money* magazine, January 1996.

The certificate of deposit is offered through MBNA America Bank, N.A., and depositors are insured up to $100,000. Member FDIC. ©1996 MBNA America Bank, N.A.

GoldCertificate and MBNA America are federally registered service marks of MBNA America Bank, N.A. Not available in all states.

TCD046